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C O U C H

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PREFACE

I AM glad to see these poems of mine put together in a handy volume: since, apart from the personal desire to leave a small monument, I know that some of the numbers included have had even the Horatian good fortune to chime in men's hearts through sentry-duty in distant lands. The silent thanks of these solitary ones is the best reward I wish for in my lifetime.

Still, re-reading these numbers, I have a hope that some of them will outlast me.

Q.

THE HAVEN, FOWEY, CORNWALL,

June 1929.

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SIR ARTHUR
QUILLER-
COUCH

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UPON NEW YEAR'S EVE

Now winds of winter glue
Their tears upon the thorn,
And earth has voices few,
And those forlorn.

And 'tis our solemn night
When maidens sand the porch,
And play at *Jack's Alight*
With burning torch,

Or cards, or *Kiss i' the Ring*—
While ashen fagots blaze,
And late wassailers sing
In miry ways.

Then, dear my wife, be blithe
To bid the New Year hail,
And welcome—plough, drill, scythe,
And jolly flail.

For though the snows he'll shake
Of winter from his head,
To settle, flake by flake,
On ours instead;

Upon New Year's Eve

Yet we be wreathèd green
Beyond his blight or chill,
Who kissed at seventeen,
And worship still.

We know not what he'll bring:
But this we know to-night—
He doth prepare the Spring
For our delight.

With birds he'll comfort us,
With blossoms, balms, and bees,
With brooks, and odorous
Wild breath o' the breeze.

Come then, O festal prime!
With sweets thy bosom fill,
And dance it, dripping thyme,
On Lantick hill.

West wind, awake! and comb
Our garden, blade from blade—
We, in our little home,
Sit unafraid.

SABINA

THE stair was steep; the Tower was tall;
Sabina's strength was gone:
She leaned a hand against the wall,
And let her boy run on.

High in the blue the Old Tower swayed
His bells to the sunset breeze:
But ever like hemlock climbed the shade
Of earth on his earth-hewn knees.

The Widow watched the red sun's glow
Steal up by the window's edge;
She saw the darkened green below,
And the wan sheep by the hedge.

'Child! Child!' she called, and 'Wait for me!'
But ever the boy's feet ran;
And up through the Whisp'ring Gallery
Came the voice of her dead man—

'He will not turn for any prayer,
Nor pause for any tear:
The winds of God harp down the stair,
Their pinnacle notes ring clear.'

Sabina

She said, 'My pulse runs low and low:
He has leapt inside of me.
Blood of my blood, shall he not know
My blood's necessity?'

The dead man said, 'He will not wait.
High in a naked room
A maiden listens, strong as fate,
And selfish as the tomb.

'Her sisters, as they cross the floor,
Throw glances at the clock:
Her father fumbles with the door,
He knows he may not lock:

'Her mother pins the bridal crown,
And pricks her trembling thumbs:
But the bride has laid her mirror down,
Her small foot drums and drums.

'A minute—hark! Ah joy, ah joy!
The helpless door falls wide,
The harp of God and the laugh of a boy
Sing aubade to the bride!

'The bride she rises from her chair—
Now never stretch your hands!
The harp, the voice, the climbing stair—
Naught else she understands.

Sabina

‘Follow the harp, take hands and run!

High on the shining leads,
Or ever a midsummer night’s begun
The swallow twitters her orison
By the granite martyrs’ heads!’

‘Dead man, we too have kissed and climbed.

Inert you moulder there,
And here I fail and flutter, limed
Fast on the middle stair.

‘Sure as upon the still-drawn east

The evening arch invades;
Sure as we hold a green earth leased
Briefly between two shades;

‘They will not reach—’

‘But they will run,
And hand in hand admire
Through loftier panes an ampler sun,
List a diviner choir:

‘Farther horizons, widening slopes—

Yet not a blossom there
But gat its increase from the hopes
We two were used to share!

Sabina

‘Woman, consign you with the years;
Consign and follow me.
What though the sun shine on our tears,
If *he* the rainbow see?’

The stair was steep; the Tower was tall;
Sabina’s strength was gone:
She bowed her face unto the wall,
And let her boy run on.

DOOM FERRY

BOATMAN, have they crossed? 'Not all:
The inn, there, hath an upper chamber,
And a window in the wall
Where the small white roses clamber.

'Many shelves run round the room;
On a shelf, and no man near them,
Two are talking low i' the gloom—
From the trellis' foot may'st hear them.'

Who are they? 'At dawn they came
By the Passage, calling *Over!*
She the corpse of a comely dame,
And the man, methinks, her lover.'

Boatman, land and climb the stair:
By the scented window-boxes
Lower me that loving pair
Here among the crimson phloxes.

Boatman, is this honey-dew
Dripping from the window-boxes?
Nay, I cannot tell its hue
Here against the crimson phloxes.

Doom Ferry

Take a guinea and a groat:

One in ale shall keep thee merry;
Let the other fee the boat
Tiding these across the ferry.

Take this purse: it shall persuade

Him who digs i' th' acre yonder
Them to bed with a cunning spade
Cheek by jowl, no turtles fonder.—

Cheek by jowl, and heart by heart,

But a thought in either buried,
That shall push them wide apart—
Wide enough ere a third be ferried.

So, between, my body I'll thrust,

Laughing, straightening out my knees there,
Either hand in a little dust
Dabbling, at my cool dead ease there.

A HOUSEKEEPING

SURPRISED by young desire, as by the dawn,
A young Orion, wildered, half awake,
Bedraggled, drenched in woodland ways withdrawn,
My heart, a-tiptoe by a dewy brake,
Spied the gods sleeping—vision of green lawn,
Pale ivory limbs, pillows of dappled fawn,
And a great quiet, and a stilly lake.

There the long grasses topped a banquet spread
—For that the turf had been their only table—
With cates and fruit and delicate white bread,
Roses a-float in craters carved with fable.
There droop'd a wreath from each relaxèd head,
And there on garland and on god were shed
The coverlet of years innumerable.

They perish not, beneath the secular oak—
Olympian Jove and all his greenwood train:
And yet no breath heaves any purple cloak;
Yet the thin leaves list at their lips in vain;
In vain the veils of morning, like a smoke,
Shake with the spiral lark. Be whist, invoke—
They perish not, yet cannot live again.

Anon upon that lake a shudder swept,
And therewithal a feeble childish wail;
And lo! a naked wingèd babe that stepped

A Housekeeping

Shoreward atween the weed and galingale,
And sought the whitest queen of all, and crept
Close to her side, and clapped her cheek, and wept,
And coaxed her ear with many an elfin tale.

‘Mother, awake! The Western Wind arrives!
Down the long gulf he breaks a wavering stair
For Phœbus’ gilded feet, and shoreward drives,
And sings across the meadows, debonair,
Pelting the Heaven with dust of golden hives,
Blown saffron bloom, and small birds with their
wives,
And happiness in handfuls everywhere.

‘Late as I couched high on the Latmian cliff,
I heard the red pine whisper wakefully;
I saw the pasturing brood-mare pause and sniff
The salt newcomer; and with mainsail free
A helmsman hailed me from his bobbing skiff—
“Praise the West Wind!” How shall I praise
him, if,
If, Cytherea, he awake not thee?

‘He may adorn the day; but ah! the dark—
The dark destroys me! When the shepherds fold
And hie them, each to his confederate spark,
His window lit, his beacon on the wold,

A Housekeeping

Then lie they warm. But me the house-dog's bark
Drives houseless, quaking through the midnight
park:

All creatures love, but Love himself's a-cold!

Thereat I stepped and gently him bespake—

‘Dear child, my cottage hath an empty room,
A flask of thin wine and an oaten cake.

She, an she wake, will thank me—She, for whom
Kings left their loves, them blithely to betake
To war, the while that for her lovely sake
Wild War himself laid by his lance and plume.’

Then first he started back a little space;

But after came and laid a hand in mine,
As glad of one that spake his mother's praise.

So forth we fared: and happy our design,
Till *thou* cam'st fluttering through the forest ways,
Thou, with the woodland sunburn on thy face,
Thou, in green kirtle pinned with eglantine.

Hillo!’ criedst thou, ‘what darling leadest there?’

Come, pretty chuck!’—and heaped him kiss on kiss.
An orphan? Save thee from thy mannish care!

Fond foundling, say, what do men know of this?’

‘But he is mine,’ said I; ‘unless thou share—’

‘If thou,’ she falter'd, ‘hast but room to spare—’

Fool, fool, fool heart! sub-letting so thy bliss!

A Housekeeping

Thenceforward for a month, as shines in Lent
The mead with daffodils, my cottage shone
With days and nights-made-noonday, being spent
In serving him that first had made us one.

And then, as droop in April's discontent
Those daffodils, thy will declined, and went
Forth from my door, leaving us twain alone.

Ah, had we never met—or, having met,
Had I been wiser or thy heart less wild!
For, wanting thee, at first he 'gan to fret,
And then to hunger as a weaning child:
And perished, wanting thee. And yet—and yet—
Hadst thou but turned or showed the least regret,
How had he waked, and stretched his arms, and
smiled!

THE WHITE MOTH

*I*F a leaf rustled, she would start:
And yet she died a year ago.
How had so frail a thing the heart
To journey where she trembled so?
And do they turn and turn in fright,
Those little feet, in so much night?

The light above the poet's head
Streamed on the page and on the cloth,
And twice and thrice there buffeted
On the black pane a white-winged moth:
'Twas Annie's soul that beat outside
And 'Open! open! open!' cried:

'I could not find the way to God:
There were too many flaming suns
For signposts, and the fearful road
Led over wastes where millions
Of tangled comets hissed and burned—
I was bewildered, and I turned.

'Oh, it was easy then! I knew
Your window and no star beside.
Look up, and take me back to you!
—He rose and thrust the window wide.
'Twas but because his head was hot
With rhyming: for he heard her not.

The White Moth

But poets polishing a phrase
Lose temper over trivial things;
And as she blundered in the blaze
Toward him, on ecstatic wings,
He raised a hand and smote her dead;
Then wrote, '*That I had died instead!*'

SHADOWS

As I walked out on Hallows' E'en,
I saw the moon swing thin and green;
I saw beside, in Fiddler's Wynd,
Two hands that moved upon a blind.

As I walked out on Martin's Feast,
I heard a woman say to a priest—
'His grave is digged, his shroud is sewn;
And the child shall pass for his very own.'

But whiles they stood beside his tomb,
I heard the babe laugh out in her womb—
'My hair will be black as his was red,
And I have a mole where his heart bled.'

THE MASQUER IN THE STREET

MASQUER on the rainy stones,
Jigging, twirling 'neath the rain,
Wherefore shake thine agèd bones
To that antique strain?

Limp thy locks and lank and thinned,
Thy grey beard it floats a yard;
And thy coat tails flap i' the wind
Like a torn placard.

'Hush!' saith he; 'there was a House—
From its porch the cressets flared;
Lads in livery called "Carouse!
For thy lust's prepared!"

'Like a snake the prelude wound—
Crash! the merry waltz began:
One unto my mind I found,
And our feet ran.

'Rubies ripped from altar-cloths
Leered adown her silk attire;
Her mad shoes were scarlet moths
In a rose of fire.

The Masquer in the Street

‘Tropic scents her tresses weaved—
Scents to lay the soul a-swoon;
On her breast the draperies heaved
Like clouds by the moon.

‘Back she bent her throat, her wet
Southern lips, and dared, and dared—
Over them my kisses met,
While the Sax-horn blared.

‘Crash! the brassy cymbal smote—
When I would have stayed our feet,
Laughter rippled all her throat
Like a wind on wheat.

‘Every laugh it left a crease,
Every ripple wrote her old—
Yet her arms would not release,
Nor her feet with-hold.

‘Ah! to watch it suck and sag—
Rosy flesh ’had breathed so warm—
Till I twirled a loveless hag
On a tortured arm!

‘Dancers, resting for a while
Down the wall with faces white,
Watched us waltzing, mile on mile,
In a horror of light!’ . . .

The Masquer in the Street

Masquer on the rainy stones,
What is that thy fingers fold?
'Dead or dying, naught atones
But I dance and hold.

'Crash! the maddened cymbal smote—
Are they minutes? Are they years,
That I hold but dust to my coat
And a few gold hairs?'

Masquer in the rainy close,
God thee pity and thy bone!
Other men have danced with those,
And now dance alone.

DOLOR OOGO

THIRTEEN men by Ruan Shore,
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Drownèd men since 'eighty-four,
Down in Dolor Oogo:
On the cliff against the sky,
Ailsa, wife of Malachi—
That cold woman—
Sits and knits eternally.

By her silent husband's side
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Stretched awake, she hears the tide
Moan in Dolor Oogo:
Till athwart the easter gale
Hark! the merry dead men hail—
'Thou cold woman,
Take the lantern from the nail!'

Rising in her chilly sark
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Forth she fares by Behan Parc,
Out to Dolor Oogo:
Kneeling there above the brink,
Lets her long red tresses sink
—That cold woman—
For the sailor-men to drink.

Dolor Oogo

Then the sailor men beneath
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Take the ends between their teeth,
Deep in Dolor Oogo.
‘Lusty blood is this to quaff:
(So the merry dead men laugh)
O, cold woman,
Hath thy man as good by half?’

‘Drownèd men by Ruan Shore
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Lost aboard the *Elsinore*
Down by Dolor Oogo—
If the gulls behind the share
Yesterday had called “Beware,
Thy cold woman!”
Paler now had been my hair.

‘Socks I knit you each a pair
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Half of yarn and half of hair,
Over Dolor Oogo.’
‘Dripping, dripping on the tide,
What red dye thy hair hath dyed,
Thou cold woman?’
‘It hath brushed upon his side.’

Dolor Oogo

Knitting with her double thread
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—
Half of black and half of red—
Over Dolor Oogo,
On the cliff against the sky,
Ailsa, wife of Malachi,
That cold woman,
Wipes her hands incessantly.

ODE

UPON ECKINGTON BRIDGE, RIVER AVON

I

O PASTORAL heart of England! like a psalm
Of green days telling with a quiet beat—
O wave into the sunset flowing calm!
O tired lark descending on the wheat!
Lies it all peace beyond that western fold
Where now the lingering shepherd sees his star
Rise upon Malvern? Paints an Age of Gold
Yon cloud with prophecies of linked ease—
Lulling this Land, with hills drawn up like knees,
To drowse beside her implements of war?

II

Man shall outlast his battles. They have swept
Avon from Naseby Field to Severn Ham;
And Evesham's dedicated stones have stepped
Down to the dust with Montfort's oriflamme.
Nor the red tear nor the reflected tower
Abides; but yet these eloquent grooves remain
Worn in the sandstone parapet hour by hour
By labouring bargemen where they shifted ropes.
E'en so shall man turn back from violent hopes
To Adam's cheer, and toil with spade again.

Ode upon Eckington Bridge, River Avon

III

Ay, and his mother Nature, to whose lap
Like a repentant child at length he hies,
Not in the whirlwind or the thunder-clap
Proclaims her more tremendous mysteries:
But when in winter's grave, bereft of light,
With still, small voice divinelier whispering
—Lifting the green head of the aconite,
Feeding with sap of hope the hazel-shoot—
She feels God's finger active at the root,
Turns in her sleep, and murmurs of the Spring.

THE PLANTED HEEL

BY Talland Church as I did go,
I passed my kindred all in a row;

Straight and silent there by the spade
Each in his narrow chamber laid.

While I passed, each kinsman's clay
Stole some virtue of mine away:

Till my shoes on the muddy road
Left not a print, so light they trod.

Back I went to the Bearers' Lane,
Begged the dead for my own again.

Answered the eldest one of my line—
'Thy heart was no one's heart but mine.'

The second claimed my working skill,
The third my wit, the fourth my will:

The fifth one said, 'Thy feet I gave;
But want no fleetness here in the grave.'

'For feet a man need have no care,
If they no weight of his own may bear.

'If I own naught by separate birth,
What binds my heel e'en now to the earth?'

The Planted Heel

The dead together answered back—
‘Naught but the wealth in thy knapsack.’

‘Nay, then,’ said I, ‘that’s quick to unload’:
And strewed my few pence out on the road.

‘O kinsmen, now be quick, resume
Each rag of me to its rightful tomb!’

The dead were silent then for a space.
Still I stood upright in my place.

Said one, ‘Some strength he will yet conceal.
‘Belike ’tis pride of a planted heel?’

‘Man has but one perduring pride:
Of knowledge alone he is justified.

‘Lie down, lie down by us in the sod:
Thou shalt be wise in the ways of God.’

‘Nay, so I stand upright in the dust,
I’ll take God’s purposes all on trust.

‘An inch of heel for a yard of spine,—
So give me again the goods that are mine!’

I planted my heel by their headstones,
And wrestled an hour with my kinsmen’s bones.

I shook their dust thrice into a sieve,
And gathered all that they had to give.

The Planted Heel

I winnowed knowledge out of the heap:
‘Take it,’ I said, ‘to warm your sleep.’

I cast their knowledge back on the sod,
And went on my journey, praising God.

Of all their knowledge I thought me rid:
But one little grain in my pack had hid.—

Now, as I go, myself I tell,
‘On a planted heel man wrestles well.’

But that little grain keeps whispering me—
‘Better, perhaps, on a planted knee.’

THE SOLDIER

(ROUMANIAN)

WHEN *winter trees bestrew the path,
Still to the twig a leaf or twain
Will cling and weep, not Winter's wrath,
But that foreknown, forlorn pain—
To fall when green leaves come again!*

I watch'd him sleep by the furrow—
The first that fell in the fight.
His grave they would dig to-morrow:
The battle called them to-night.

They bore him aside to the trees, there,
By his undigg'd grave content
To lie on his shoulders at ease there,
And hark how the battle went.

The battle went by the village,
And back through the night were borne
Far cries of murder and pillage,
With smoke from the standing corn.

But when they came on the morrow,
They talk'd not over their task,
As he listen'd there by the furrow;
For the dead mouth could not ask—

The Soldier

How went the battle, my brothers?

But that he will never know:

For his mouth the red earth smothers

As they shoulder their spades and go.

Yet he cannot sleep thereunder,

But ever must toss and turn.

How went the battle, I wonder?

—And that he will never learn!

When winter trees bestrew the path,

Still to the twig a leaf or twain

Will cling and weep, not Winter's wrath,

But that foreknown, forlorn pain—

To fall when green leaves come again!

JEZEBEL

THIS is the song they made for Jezebel,
The King's daughter of Zidon,
Chanting her through the gate of Samaria
By the way of Jezreel.
Tzing-gong! to the tunable cymbals,
Bells a-swing on her canopy,
This is the song the Sons of Korah
Lifted beneath the terebinths:
Maschil, a Song of Loves for Jezebel,
A bride meet for Ahab.

'Gladdened with lutes from ivory palaces,
With Kings' daughters attendant,
Scented of myrrh, of aloes, of cassia
Come, O bridegroom, forth!
Sworded on thigh and sceptred of equity,
Fairer than children of men,
Chism'd of the Lord above thy fellows,
Alight, O King, from thy chariot!
Lead, to her throne beside thee, Jezebel
Dazzling in gold of Ophir!
—*But hush! the grooms are sponging his chariot
By the pool of Samaria.*

Jezebel

‘Hearken, O daughter! Leave to remember

Thy people, thy father’s house:

So shall the King desire thy loveliness—

Worship thou him, thy lord!

She of Tyre, that was thy playfellow,

Sues thee now with a gift:

The merchants also, thy friends aforetime,

Henceforth are thy homagers.

‘Glorious within is the King’s daughter

To whom the Isles pay tribute!

Lead her, clothed in a garment of needlework,

Lay her to bed, O Virgins!

Whisper “Be comforted, bride of Israel,

Thou that wast of Zidon:

In place of fathers shall be thy children

Princes in all the earth!”’

This was the song they made for Jezebel:

Maschil, a Song of Loves.

—*But hush! The dogs are eating Jezebel,*

By the wall of Jezreel.

THE STATUES AND THE TEAR

ALL night a fountain pleads,
Telling her beads,
Her tinkling beads monotonous 'neath the moon;
And where she springs atween,
Two statues lean—
Two Kings, their marble beards with moonlight strewn.

Till hate had frozen speech,
Each hated each,
Hated and died, and went unto his place:
And still inveterate
They lean and hate
With glare of stone implacable, face to face.

She, who bade set them here
In stone austere,
To both was dear, and did not guess at all:
Yet with her new-wed lord
Walking the sward
Paused, and for two dead friends a tear let fall:

So turn'd and went her way.
Yet in the spray
The shining tear attempts, but cannot lie.
Night-long the fountain drips,
But ever slips

The Statues and the Tear

Untold that one bead of her rosary:—
While they, who know it would
Lie if it could,
Lean on and hate, watching it, eye to eye.

THE SPLENDID SPUR

NOR on the neck of prince or hound,
Nor on a woman's finger twined,
May gold from the deriding ground
Keep sacred that we sacred bind:
Only the heel
Of splendid steel
Shall stand secure on sliding fate,
When golden navies weep their freight.

The scarlet hat, the laurelled stave,
Are measures, not the springs, of worth;
In a wife's lap, as in a grave,
Man's airy notions mix with earth.
Seek other spur
Bravely to stir
The dust in this loud world, and tread
An Alp among the whisp'ring dead!

Trust in thyself,—then spur amain!
So shall Charybdis wear a grace,
Grim Ætna laugh, the Libyan plain
Take roses to her shrivelled face.
This orb—this round
Of sight and sound—
Count it the lists that God hath built
For haughty hearts to ride a-tilt.

ALMA MATER

[OXFORD]

KNOW you her secret none can utter?
Hers of the Book, the tripled Crown?
Still on the spire the pigeons flutter,
Still by the gateway flits the gown;
Still on the street, from corbel and gutter,
Faces of stone look down.

Faces of stone, and other faces—
Some from library windows wan
Forth on her gardens, her green spaces,
Peer and turn to their books anon.
Hence, my Muse, from the green oases
Gather the tent, begone!

Nay, should she by the pavement linger
Under the rooms where once she played,
Who from the feast would rise to fling her
One poor *sou* for her serenade?
One short laugh for the antic finger
Thrumming a lute-string frayed?

Once, my dear—but the world was young then—
Magdalen elms and Trinity limes—

Alma Mater

Lissom the blades and the backs that swung then,
Eight good men in the good old times—
Careless we, and the chorus flung then
Under St. Mary's chimes!

Reins lay loose and the ways led random—
Christ Church meadow and Iffley track,
'Idleness horrid and dog-cart' (tandem),
Aylesbury grind and Bicester pack—
Pleasant our lines, and faith! we scanned 'em:
Having that artless knack.

Come, old limmer, the times grow colder;
Leaves of the creeper redden and fall.
Was it a hand then clapped my shoulder?—
Only the wind by the chapel wall!
Dead leaves drift on the lute . . . So, fold her
Under the faded shawl.

C. C. L. ASHOKNAGAR, HYD.

Never we wince, though none deplore us,
We who go reaping that we sowed;
Cities at cock-crow wake before us—
Hey, for the lilt of the London road!
One look back, and a rousing chorus!
Never a palinode!

Alma Mater

Still on her spire the pigeons hover;
Still by her gateway haunts the gown.
Ah! but her secret? You, young lover,
Drumming her old ones forth from town,
Know you the secret none discover?
Tell it—when *you* go down.

Yet if at length you seek her, prove her,
Lean to her whispers never so nigh;
Yet if at last, not less her lover,
You in your hansom leave the High;
Down from her towers a ray shall hover—
Touch you, a passer-by!

TO MAURICE HEWLETT

HEWLETT! as ship to ship
Let us the ensign dip!
There may be who despise
For dross our merchandise,
Our balladries, our bales
Of woven tales;
Yet, Hewlett, the glad gales
Favonian! And what spray
Our dolphins toss'd in play,
Full in old Triton's beard, on Iris' shimmering veils!

Scant tho' the freight of gold
Commercial in our hold,
Pæstum, Eridanus
Perchance have barter'd us
'Bove chrematistic care
Some precious, rare,
Unmarketable ware;
Or amber to bedeck
A Grace's naked neck,
Or transient rose, yet meet to braid Apollo's hair.

Boon further wouldst thou beg
Of Jove? Then I've a keg
Of Coan in the waist.
Come, row aboard, and taste

To Maurice Hewlett

The glorifying juice
That wise men use
And only fools refuse!
'Twill teach thee tolerate
All rubs of human fate,
The which to mitigate are lent the Vine, the Muse.

TO A FRIEND WHO SENT ME A BOX
OF VIOLETS

NAY, more than violets
These thoughts of thine, friend!
Rather thy reedy brook—
Taw's tributary—
At midnight murmuring,
Descried them, the delicate
The dark-eyed goddesses,
There by his cressy bed
Dissolved and dreaming—
Dreams that distilled into dew
All the purple of night,
All the shine of a planet.

Whereat he whispered;
And they arising—
Of day's forget-me-nots
The duskier sisters—
Descended, relinquished
The orchard, the trout-pool,
Torridge and Tamar,
The Druid circles,
Sheepfolds of Dartmoor,
Granite and sandstone;
By Roughtor, Dozmarè,

To a Friend who sent me a Box of Violets

Down the vale of the Fowey
Moving in silence,
Brushing the nightshade
By bridges cyclopean,
By Trevenna, Treverbyn,
Lewharne and Largin,
By Glynn, Lanhydrock,
Restormel, Lostwithiel,
Dark wood, dim water, dreaming town;
Down the vale of the Fowey
To the tidal water
Washing the feet
Of holy St. Winnow—
Each, in her exile
Musing the message,
Passed, as a starlit
Phantom of Ruth from the land
of the Moabite.

So they came,
Valley-born, valley-nurtured—
Came to the tideway
The jetties, the anchorage,
The salt wind piping,
Snoring in Equinox,
By ships at anchor,
By quays tormented,

To a Friend who sent me a Box of Violets

Storm-bitten streets;
Came to The Haven
Crying, 'Ah, shelter us,
The strayed ambassadors,
Love's lost legation
On a comfortless coast!'

Nay, but a little sleep,
A little folding
Of petals to the lull
Of quiet rainfalls—
Here in my garden,
In angle sheltered
From north and east wind—
Softly shall recreate
The courage of charity,
Henceforth not to me only
Breathing the message.

Clean-breath'd Sirens!
Henceforth the mariner
Here in the fairway
Fetching—foul of keel,
Long-stray but fortunate—
Out of the fogs, the vast
Atlantic solitudes,
Shall, by the hawser-pin

To a Friend who sent me a Box of Violets

Waiting the signal
Leave—go—anchor!
Scent the familiar,
The unforgettable
Fragrance of home;
So in a long breath
Bless all, unknowing:
Bless them, the violets,
Bless me, the gardener,
Bless thee, the giver.

OF THREE CHILDREN CHOOSING A CHAPLET OF VERSE

You and I and Burd so blithe—
Burd so blithe, and you, and I—
The Mower he would whet his scythe
Before the dew was dry.

And he woke soon, but we woke soon
And drew the nursery blind,
All wondering at the waning moon
With the small June roses twined:
Low in her cradle swung the moon
With an elfin dawn behind.

In whispers, while our elders slept,
We knelt and said our prayers,
And dress'd us and on tiptoe crept
Adown the creaking stairs.

The world's possessors lay abed,
And all the world was ours—
'Nay, nay, but hark! the Mower's tread!
And we must save the flowers!'

The Mower knew not rest nor haste—
That old unweary man:
But we were young. We paused and raced
And gathered while we ran.

Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse

O youth is careless, youth is fleet,
With heart and wing of bird!
The lark flew up beneath our feet,
To his copse the pheasant whirr'd;
The cattle from their darkling lairs
Heaved up and stretch'd themselves;
Almost they trod at unawares
Upon the busy elves
That dropp'd their spools of gossamer,
To dangle and to dry,
And scurried home to the hollow fir
Where the white owl winks an eye.
Nor you, nor I, nor Burd so blithe
Had driven them in this haste;
But the old, old man, so lean and lithe,
That afar behind us paced;
So lean and lithe, with shoulder'd scythe,
And a whetstone at his waist.
Within the gate, in a grassy round
Whence they had earliest flown,
He upside-down'd his scythe, and ground
Its edge with careful hone.
But we heeded not, if we heard, the sound,
For the world was ours alone;
The world was ours!—and with a bound
The conquering Sun upshone!

Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse

And while as from his level ray
We stood our eyes to screen,
The world was not as yesterday
Our homelier world had been—
So grey and golden-green it lay
All in his quiet sheen,
That wove the gold into the grey,
The grey into the green.
Sure never hand of Puck, nor wand
Of Mab the fairies' queen,
Nor prince nor peer of fairyland
Had power to weave that wide riband
Of the grey, the gold, the green.
But the Gods of Greece had been before
And walked our meads along;
The great authentic Gods of yore
That haunt the earth from shore to shore
Trailing their robes of song.
And where a sandall'd foot had brush'd,
And where a scarfèd hem,
The flowers awoke from sleep and rush'd
Like children after them.
Pell-mell they poured by vale and stream,
By lawn and steepy brae—
'O children, children! while you dream,
Your flowers run all away!'

Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse

But afar and abed and sleepily
The children heard us call;
And Burd so blithe, and you, and I
Must be gatherers for all.

The meadow-sweet beside the hedge
The dog-rose and the vetch,
The sworded iris 'mid the sedge
The mallow by the ditch—

With these, and by the wimpling burn,
Where the midges danced in reels,
With the watermint and the lady fern
We brimm'd our wicker creels:

Till, all so heavily they weigh'd,
On a bank we flung us down,
Shook out our treasures 'neath the shade
And wove this Triple Crown—

Flower after flower—for some there were
The noonday heats had dried,
And some were dear yet could not bear
A lovelier cheek beside,
And some were perfect past compare—
Ah, darlings! what a world of care
It cost us to decide!

Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse

Natheless we sang in sweet accord,
Each bending o'er her brede—
'O there be flowers in Oxenford,
And flowers be north of Tweed,
And flowers there be on earthly sward
That owe no mortal seed!'

And these, the loveliest that we wove,
Were Innocence and Truth,
And holy Peace and angel Love,
Glad Hope and gentle Ruth.
Ah, bind them fast with triple twine
Of Memory, the wild woodbine
That still, being human, stays divine,
And alone is age's youth! . . .

But hark! but look! the warning rook
Wings home in level flight;
The children tired with play and book
Have kiss'd and call'd Good-night!

Ah, sisters, look! What fields be these
That lie so sad and shorn?
What hand has cut our coppices,
And thro' the trimm'd, the ruin'd, trees
Lets wail a wind forlorn?

THE LEAST OF THESE

‘**L**ORD, in Thy Courts
Are seats so green bestow’d,
As there resorts
Along the dusty road
A cavalcade,—King, Bishop, Knight, and Judge:
And though I toil behind and meanly trudge,
Let me, too, lie upon that pleasant sward,
For I am weary, Lord.

‘Christ, at Thy board
Are wines and dishes drest
That do afford
Contentment to the best.
And though with Poverty my bed hath been
These many years, and my refreshment lean,
With plenty now at last my soul acquaint,
Dear Master, for I faint.’

But through the grille,
‘Where is thy Robe?’ said He:
‘Wouldst eat thy fill,
Yet shirk civility?’
‘My Robe, alas! There was a little child
That shivered by the road——’ Swiftly God smiled:
‘I was that Child,’ said He, and raised the pin;
‘Dear friend, enter thou in!’

TO BEARERS

MAIDS, carry her forth—your dead,
Your pale young queen;
Two at her feet, two at her head,
And four between.—

Not as we wanted it,
But as God granted it.

Not now to the swinging chime,
To the organ swell,
Keep we the rank, treading in time—
But one dull bell.

Open the gates for her!
The Bridegroom waits for her.

We never had dreamed it so:
But she—she knew;
Walking aloof, placid of brow,
Her short life through:

Scornful, in surety
Guarding her purity.

Buds born for the bridal path
Cover her breast:
Babes of the dream now that she hath
Sleep in her rest.

Our peace above her let
Fall for her coverlet.

Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse

'Tis Time, 'tis Time has done this crime
And laid our meadows waste!—
The bent unwearied tyrant Time,
That knows nor rest nor haste.

Yet courage, children; homeward bring
Your hearts, your garlands high!
For we have dared to do a thing
That shall his worst defy.

We cannot nail the dial's hand;
We cannot bind the sun
By Gibeon to stay and stand,
Or the moon o'er Ajalon;

We cannot blunt th' abhorrèd shears,
Nor shift the skeins of Fate,
Nor say unto the posting years
'Ye shall not desolate.'

We cannot cage the lion's rage,
Nor teach the turtle-dove
Beside what well his moan to tell
Or to haunt one only grove;
But the lion's brood will range for food
As the fledgèd bird will rove.

Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse

And east and west we three may wend—

Yet we a wreath have wound

For us shall wind withouten end

The wide, wide world around:

Be it east or west, and ne'er so far,

In east or west shall peep no star,

No blossom break from ground,

But minds us of the wreath we wove

Of innocence and holy love

That in the meads we found,

And handsell'd from the Mower's scythe,

And bound with memory's living withe—

You and I and Burd so blithe—

Three maidens on a mound:

And all of happiness was ours

Shall find remembrance 'mid the flowers,

Shall take revival from the flowers

And by the flowers be crown'd.

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As there resorts
Along the dusty road
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Fall for her coverlet.

THE ROOT

DEEP, Love, yea, very deep,
And in the dark exiled,
I have no sense of light but still to creep
And know the breast, but not the eyes. Thy child
Saw ne'er his mother near, nor if she smiled;
But only feels her weep.

Yet clouds and branches green
There be aloft, somewhere,
And winds, and angel birds that build between,
As I believe—and I will not despair;
For faith is evidence of things not seen.
Love! if I could be there!

I will be patient, dear!
Perchance some part of me
Puts forth aloft and feels the rushing year,
And shades the bird, and is that happy tree.
Then were it strength to serve and not appear,
And bliss, though blind, to be.

JENIFER'S LOVE

SMALL is my secret—let it pass—
Small in your life the share I had,
Who sat beside you in the class,
 Awed by the bright superior lad:
 Whom yet with hot and eager face
 I prompted when he missed his place.

For you the call came swift and soon:—
 But sometimes in your holidays
You met me trudging home at noon
 To dinner through the dusty ways,
 And recognized, and with a nod
 Passed on, but never guessed—thank God!

Truly our ways were separate.
 I bent myself to hoe and drill,
Yea, with an honest man to mate,
 Fulfilling God Almighty's will;
 And bore him children. But my prayers
 Were yours—and, only after, theirs.

While you—still loftier, more remote,
 You sprang from stair to stair of fame,
And you've a riband on your coat,
 And you've a title to your name.
 But have you yet a star to shine
 Above your bed, as I o'er mine?

COTTAGE MUSK

OR in caprice or through neglect
Gone is the Greengage, rusty-speck'd,
Gone the Red Sage that once bedecked
Our garden alleys.
But most I miss the Musk, of yore
That scented every cottage door
And pathway of the labouring poor,
—But sweetliest Sally's.

Hers was a life together lent
With it and its belonging scent—
God knows which way or why they went—
But you may go where
You will, and search the countryside
Where wavering clouds and waters glide:
It died, the year that Sally died—
You'll find it nowhere.

PREMONITION

SHE sat upon the cottage stair,—
A tender child of three,
And washed and dressed with wisest care
The doll upon her knee.

And we, who guessed not why there grew
In Annie's baby eyes
That little clouding of the blue,
That shade of awed surmise,

Remembered, in the darkened room,
Where yesterday we took
Our Annie's new-born babe, on whom
Her eyes might never look.

LOVE SEQUESTERED

THOUGH in her grey unclouded eyes
No cheat abode, nor compromise,
But truth in clearest outline shone,
And sin from honour stood alone;

Yet to be with her was to walk
A faëry shore, and list the talk
Of dropping streams, and nightingales,
And gods dissolved in inland vales.

And though we loved and lived remote,
Nor feat achieved deserving note,
Each trivial step was sanctified
In that we took it side by side.

TO A MOTHER, ON SEEING HER SMILE
REPEATED IN HER DAUGHTER'S EYES

A THOUSAND songs I might have made
Of You, and only You;
A thousand thousand tongues of fire
That trembled down a golden wire
To lamp the night with stars, to braid
The morning bough with dew.

Within the greenwood girl and boy
Had loiter'd to their lure,
And men in cities closed their books
To dream of Spring and running brooks
And all that ever was of joy
For manhood to abjure.

And I'd have made them strong, so strong,
Outlasting towers and towns—
Millennial shepherds 'neath the thorn
Had piped them to a world reborn,
And danced Delight the dale along
And up the daisied downs.

To a Mother

A thousand songs I might have made . . .

But you required them not;

Content to reign your little while

Ere, abdicating with a smile,

You pass'd into a shade, a shade

Immortal—and forgot!

EXMOOR VERSES

I. VASHTI'S SONG

O VER the rim of the moor,
And under the starry sky,
Two men came to my door
And rested them thereby.

Beneath the bough and the star,
In a whispering foreign tongue
They talked of a land afar
And the merry days so young.

Beneath the dawn and the bough
I heard them arise and go—
And my heart it is aching now
For the more it will never know.

Why did they two depart
Before I could understand?
Where lies that land, O my heart—
O my heart, where lies that land?

II. SATURN

F ROM my farm, from hère farm
Furtively we came.
In either home a hearth was warm:
We nursed a hungrier flame.

Exmoor Verses

Our feet were foul with mire,
Our faces blind with mist;
But all the night was naked fire
About us where we kiss'd.

To hère farm, to mý farm,
Loathing we returned;
Pale beneath a gallows' arm
The planet Saturn burned.

III. DERELICTION

O'ER the tears that we shed, dear,
The bitter vines twist,
And the hawk and the red deer
They keep where we kiss'd:
All empty lies the shieling
That sheltered from rain,
With a star to pierce the ceiling,
And the wind a broken pane.
Thro' the mist, up the moorway,
Fade hunters and pack;
Down the ridge to the doorway
Homing voices float back . . .
O, between the threads of mist, love,
Reach your hands from the house:
Only mind that we kiss'd, love,
And forget the broken vows!

THE GENTLE SAVAGE

Go down, my Soul, unto the river;
The day is done, the mountain mute;
Thou hast a message to deliver—

Why loiterest yet irresolute?

See, on the farther bank,
The lamp-light winking
Across the city, cooling there her flank
Like a beast drinking!

Down by the mill, the ghostly miller
May see a twilit phantom steal
And loose an arrow duskier, shriller,
Than flies the bat about his wheel.

Arrow of secret call!

Call to her only

Who, at her window on the city wall,
Waiteth so lonely.

O Mother, in thy royal chamber
How barest thou such a son as I?
Thou, cased at heart with pearl and amber,
With starch and stiff embroidery:

I, the brown Ishmaelite—

I, whom the starry

Summits behold at loose upon the night
After my quarry?

The Gentle Savage

Small Mother mine, amid thy roses

Thy heart sings all the day content:

The curtained wall that round thee closes

Reminds not of imprisonment.

I, on the mountain-tops

All the day roaming,

Recall thee never till a shadow drops

From the rook, homing.

That call renews our blood's confusion—

Thy babe leaps naked back to thee:

Thy soul remembers her seclusion,

And mine abhors her liberty.

Suppliant I nestle then

To thee the stronger,

And seek my strength of thee, mother of men,

Mere Queen no longer.

A moment—and our wiser senses

Restore to each the life apart.

Yet, as the violet condenses

All Venus in her dewy heart,

So all the night I hear

Thy lids distilling

A love that holds in every purple tear

Love's planet thrilling.

THE COMRADE

STRANGER by the tavern board,
Brown man with the splendid eyne,
Thou and I make no accord
Till thou give the countersign
Here, across the Rhenish wine!

I had word in Trebizond
Of thy favours to my blood,
Of my father's cancelled bond,
Why his widow lacked not food:
Truly I believe thee good.

Well I know my mother's lips
Called thee kinder than her Own
In those months my wandered ships,
Fouler than this red beard grown,
Wallowed in a raving zone.

'Needs no token round thy neck!—
Over deserts dusky white,
Where the frosted quarter-deck
Shivered back the Northern Light
Through the aching Arctic night;

The Comrade

By the coral-locked lagoon,
While upon the seamless blue
Like a silver clasp, the moon
Drew the gauzèd night, wherethrough
Her two horns dripped honey-dew;

Thine the face that, first and last,
Haunted me. For thee I scanned
Passing deck and lifting mast,
Peep of dawn and fall of land.
Now we meet—hold back thy hand!

Tho' thou smilest by the board,
Tho' our fingers itch to twine,
Thou and I make no accord
Till I have the countersign
Here, across the Rhenish wine.

He that loves but half of Earth
Loves but half enough for me.
Succourer of starving Worth,
Say, but could thy Charity
Stoop as pitiful a knee,

Hold as equable a torch
O'er the hell that sinners tread?
Tenderly, in windy porch,
Lift the drooping harlot's head,
As the good man's in his bed?

The Comrade

Earth, that built our jolly bones,—
Earth, that brewed our jovial blood,—
In each atom of us owns
Spark of filial fire that should
Quicken to her parent mood.

Here, astride the breasts of Earth,
With the wind upon thy face,
Canst resound thy mother's mirth,
Catch a breath and say a grace
For the glory of the pace?—

Thankful for thy privilege
In the hunter's gallant stride,
In the glancing rapid's edge,
In the waters that divide
To thy nimble, naked pride;

Thankful for the climber's heel
Fast above the smooth ravine,
For the hand-shake of the wheel,
When the giddy royals lean
And the forefoot treads it green;

For the sleep of tired limbs,
For the feast of meat and wine,
For the merry laugh that brims
Labour with a froth divine?—
Pledge me this, and I am thine.

The Comrade

Then to horse!—the gates are wide.

Host, a cup before we go!

He and I are pledged to ride

Till the gust of onset blow

Dead the failing spark; and so—

Having reached, or failed to reach,

In no Abbey will we lie,

But upon a league-long beach

Find the braver cemet'ry,

Winnowed by the wave and sky.

THE CAPTAIN

THERE is a captain that commands,
And never but to victory:
'The counsel of thine heart it stands,
No man so faithful unto thee.'
 Though seven senses watch the wall,
 And all thy courage leap at call,
 He is thine ark and arsenal,
 Thine armour and artillery.

Yea, while the cloakèd sentries tramp
And challenge with a deep 'All's well!'
He lists the sappers from the camp
 Encroaching on thy citadel;
 Invisible he tries the guns,
 And leaning o'er the bastions
 Discerns the tented legions,
 Earthwork and trench and parallel.

O man! in vain they creep and mine;
 Thy ramp remains inviolate.
But if by folly or design
 Thou force that friend to abdicate,
 A broken pole, a trodden keep,
 The standard of thy soul shall weep,
 And all her trophies lie a heap
 That owls and satyrs desecrate.

CHANT ROYAL OF HIGH VIRTUE

WHO lives in suit of armour pent
And hides himself behind a wall,
For him is not the great event,
The garland nor the Capitol.
And is God's guerdon less than they?
Nay, moral man, I tell thee Nay:
Nor shall the flaming forts be won
By sneaking negatives alone,
By Lenten fast or Ramazàn;
But by the challenge proudly thrown—
Virtue is that becrowns a Man!

God, in His Palace resident
Of Bliss, beheld our sinful ball,
And charged His own Son innocent
Us to redeem from Adam's fall.
'Yet must it be that men Thee slay.'
'Yea, tho' it must, must I obey,'
Said Christ; and came, His royal Son,
To die, and dying to atone
For harlot, thief, and publican.
Read on that rood He died upon—
Virtue is that becrowns a Man!

Chant Royal of High Virtue

Beneath that rood where He was bent

I saw the world's great captains all
Pass riding home from tournament

Adown the road from Roncesvalles—
Lord Charlemagne, in one array
Lords Cæsar, Cyrus, Attila,
Lord Alisaundre of Macedon . . .

With flame on lance and habergeon

They passed, and to the rataplan
Of drums gave salutation—

'Virtue is that becrowns a Man!'

Had tall Achilles lounged in tent

For aye, and Xanthus neigh'd in stall,
The towers of Troy had ne'er been shent,

Nor stay'd the dance in Priam's hall.

Bend o'er thy book till thou be grey,

Read, mark, perpend, digest, survey,

Instruct thee deep as Solomon,

One only chapter thou shalt con,

One lesson learn, one sentence scan,

One title and one colophon—

Virtue is that becrowns a Man!

High Virtue's hest is eloquent

With spur and not with martingall:

Swear not to her thou'rt continent:

BE COURTEOUS, BRAVE, AND LIBERAL.

Chant Royal of High Virtue

God fashion'd thee of chosen clay
For service, nor did ever say,
'Deny thee this,' 'Abstain from yon,'
But to inure thee, thew and bone,
To be confirmèd of the clan
That made immortal Marathon—
Virtue is that becrowns a Man!

ENVOY

Young Knight, the lists are set to-day!
Hereafter shall be time to pray
In sepulture, with hands of stone.
Ride, then! outride the bugle blown!
And gaily dinging down the van
Charge with a cheer—'Set on! Set on!
Virtue is that becrowns a Man!

THREE MEN OF TRURO

I

E. W. B.

*Archbishop of Canterbury: sometime the First Bishop
of Truro. October 1896*

THE Church's outpost on a neck of land—
By ebb of faith the foremost left the last—
Dull, starved of hope, we watched the driven sand
Blown through the hour-glass, covering our past
Counting no hours to our relief—no hail
Across the hills, and on the sea no sail!

Sick of monotonous days we lost account,
In fitful dreams remembering days of old
And nights—th' erect Archangel on the Mount
With sword that drank the dawn; the Vase of Gold,
The moving Grail athwart the starry fields
Where all the heavenly spearmen clashed their
shields.

In dereliction by the deafening shore
We sought no more aloft, but sank our eyes,
Probing the sea for food, the earth for ore.
Ah, yet had one good soldier of the skies
Burst through the wrack reporting news of them,
How had we run and kissed his tunic's hem!

Three Men of Truro

Nay, but he came! Nay, but he stood and cried,
Panting with joy and the fierce fervent race,
‘Arm, arm! for Christ returns!’—and all our pride,
Our ancient pride, answered that eager face:
‘Repair His battlements!—Your Christ is near!’
And, half in dream, we raised the soldiers’ cheer.

Far, as we flung that challenge, fled the ghosts—
Back, as we built, the obscene foe withdrew—
High to the song of hammers sang the hosts
Of Heaven—and lo! the daystar, and a new
Dawn with its chalice and its wind as wine;
And youth was hope, and life once more divine!

.
Day, and hot noon, and now the evening glow,
And ’neath our scaffolding the city spread
Twilit, with rain-wash’d roofs, and—hark!—below,
One late bell tolling. ‘Dead? Our Captain dead?’
Nay, here with us he fronts the westering sun
With shaded eyes and counts the wide fields won.

Aloft with us! And while another stone
Swings to its socket, haste with trowel and hod!
Win the old smile a moment ere, alone,
Soars the great soul to bear report to God.
Night falls; but thou, dear Captain, from thy star
Look down, behold how bravely goes the war!

Three Men of Truro

II

A. B. D.

Canon Residentiary and Precentor of Truro

December 1903 .

MANY had builded, and, the building done,
Through our adorned gates with din
Came Prince and Priest, with pipe and clarion
Leading the right God in.

Yet, had the perfect temple quickened then
And whispered us between our song,
*'Give God the praise. To whom of living men
Shall next our thanks belong?'*

Then had the few, the very few, that wist
His Atlantëan labour, swerved
Their eyes to seek, and in the triumph missed,
The man that most deserved.

He only of us was incorporate
In all that fabric; stone by stone
Had built his life in her, had made his fate
And her perfection one;

Given all he had; and now—when all was given—
Far spent, within a private shade,
Heard the loud organ pealing praise to Heaven,
And learned why man is made.—

Three Men of Truro

To break his strength, yet always to be brave;
To preach, and act, the Crucified . . .
Sweep by, O Prince and Prelate, up the nave,
And fill it with your pride!

Better than ye what made th' old temples great,
Because he loved, he understood;
Indignant that his darling, less in state,
Should lack a martyr's blood.

She hath it now. O mason, strip away
Her scaffolding, the flower disclose!
Lay by the tools with his o'er-wearied clay—
But She shall bloom unto its Judgement Day,
His ever-living Rose!

III

C. W. S.

The Fourth Bishop of Truro

May 1912

PRINCE of courtesy defeated,
Heir of hope untimely cheated,
Throned awhile he sat and, seated,

Saw his Cornish round him gather;
'Teach us how to live, good Father!'
How to die he taught us rather:

Three Men of Truro

Heard the startling trumpet sound him,
Smiled upon the feast around him,
Rose, and wrapp'd his coat, and bound him

Where beyond the awful surges,
Bathed in dawn on Syrian verges,
God! thy star, thy Cross emerges.

And so sing we all to it—

*Crux, in cœlo lux superna,
Sis in carnis hac taberna
Mihi pedibus lucerna:*

*Quo vexillum dux cohortis
Sistet, super flumen Mortis,
Te, flammantibus in portis!*

VICTORIA

(JUNE 22ND, 1893)

‘There was absolutely no panic, no shouting, no rushing aimlessly about. The officers went quietly to their stations. Everything was prepared, and the men were all in their positions. . . . I can further testify to the men below in the engine-rooms. . . . In all the details of this terrible accident one spot especially stands out, and that is the heroic conduct of those who to the end remained below, stolidly yet boldly, at their place of duty.’—*Captain Bourke’s Statement.*

QUEEN! What is this that comes
Borne on thy rolling drums
At sunrise from the far
Syrian borders?
—Sped from the flags that fly
Half-mast at Tripoli,
Where float the ships of war,
Thy virgin warders?

Where tarries she who should
Captain that sisterhood,
Named with thy name, and own
Offspring of Victory?
Deep, eighty fathoms deep,
She, with her crew asleep,
Recks not the signal flown,
Vain, valedictory.

Victoria

Not in Thy day of wrath,
Lord God of Sabaoth,
 Nor upon rock or sand
 Hemmed with Thy breath round;
But leading tranquilly
Upon a tranquil sea,
 Swift at a sister's hand
 Took she her death-wound.

So She, the stricken hull,
The doomed, the beautiful,
 Proudly to Death abased
 Her brow Titanic.
Praise now her multitude
Who, nursed in fortitude,
 Stood and their burial faced,
 Scorners of panic.

Fate, that to admirals,
Assigns their funerals,
 To some the battle's ridge
 Full-starred, to die on—
Took not the spirit proud
From him she less allowed.
 —Upright upon the bridge,
 Sank the brave Tryon.

Victoria

Now for the seamen whom
Thy not degenerate womb
 Bred thus to die for thee,
 England, be tearless:
Rise, and with front serene
Answer, thou Spartan queen,
 ‘Still God is good to me:
 My sons are fearless.’

Back to the flags that fly
Half-mast at Tripoli,
 Back on the sullen drum
 Mourning *Victoria*,
Loud, ay, and jubilant,
Hurl thine imperial chant—
 ‘*In morte talium*
 Stat Matris gloria!’

CORONATION HYMN

Tune—Luther's Chorale

'Ein' feste burg ist unser Gott'

I

OF old our City hath renown,
Of God are her foundations,
Wherein this day a King we crown
Elate among the nations.

Acknowledge, then, thou King—
And you, ye people, sing—
What deeds His arm hath wrought:
Yea, let their tale be taught
To endless generations.

II

So long, so far, Jehovah guides
His people's path attending,
By pastures green and water-sides
Toward His hill ascending;
Whence they beneath the stars
Shall view their ancient wars,
Their perils, far removed.
O might of mercy proved!
O love past comprehending!

Coronation Hymn

III

He was that God, for man which spake
From Sinai forth in thunder;
He was that Love, for man which brake
The dreadful grave asunder.
Lord over every lord,
His consecrating word
An earthly prince awaits;
Lift then your heads, ye gates!
Your King comes riding under.

IV

Be ye lift up, ye deathless doors;
Let wave your banners o'er Him!
Exult, ye streets; be strewn, ye floors,
With palm, with bay, before Him!
With trumpets fetch Him in,
Ye ransom'd folk from sin—
Your Lord, return'd to bless!
O kneeling king, confess—
O subject men, adore Him!

VIA SACRA

[TO A FRENCH FRIEND]

[THOU that in years to come shalt tread this Sacred
Way,

By Rheims to Vimy Ridge, to Belfort by Verdun,
through weeping veils or fann'd by breath of summer
gay,

Let lift thy heart, O man! in benediction.

alt, and let lift thy heart beside—no matter which—

Hummock, or wooden cross, or bed of nettles where
once was a hearth,—dry well, or pervenche by the
ditch—

Choose as thou wilt—be sure a son of France lies
there.

—A child whose mother's hand even thus caressed his
hair

As the wind smoothes the grass (Pray soft, O passer-
by!):

Whose ear asleep her lip touch'd fluttering with a prayer,
Whose lids asleep she conn'd with candle lifted high.

Asleep, asleep—and now, in a huddle of bloody rags

Asleep, dug in to rot and dung this eastering slope:
Claimed—'was' and 'was to be'—by the tambours and
the flags—

Pity the schoolboy's dream, but more the mother's
hope!

Via Sacra

'Monsieur, they died for France. Pity not us, nor these,
Equal for France the French, the wife's heart with
the man's:
Equal the horn of Roland high on the Pyrenees;
Equal the lance of Joan in the gate of Orléans.

'Domrémy! Vaucouleurs!—thou Rachel, raise no dirge,
Thou Rizpah, croon no name to the distaff, to the
yarn.
Maids again we ride by the Maid as she heads the surge
Swinging the shield of Gaul 'cross Paris to the
Marne!'

Mount, O man, to the ridge, to the calvary facing Metz,
Behold the looping river, the poplars along the plain.
And afar on the ramp an angel: hear from the parapets
Her bugle to these dead sounding 'Lorraine! Lor-
raine!'

Orchards of France! Of these your fruit shall break
again,
Their blood, replenishing, make red the wine-vat's
flow,
Their spirit wind in the breeze benignant over the
grain,
Blessing the child that gleans in fields his elders sow.

Via Sacra

Thou that in years to come shalt tread this Sacred Way
Thy lesson learnt, return to thy Ville Lumière;
To the boulevard, to the Bois, to the restaurant, to the
play,
To the supper, the all-night-lit and flaming thorough-
fare.

But the bread thou dipp'st alone shall make no more a
feast,
Nor the wine thou sipp'st apart yield thee thine old
content:
The bread is the body broken; poured out for thee, O
priest,
This wine is the blood of man. Receive the sacra-
ment.

Yet muse, and 'neath the arc thy soul shall find her
peace;
Child of a day—for France, thy France, no more
afraid—
In thy wet eyes the street-lamps waver the fleurs-de-
lys,—
Hark! up the Avenue, the nightride of the Maid!

SONNET

ISLES OF SCILLY

I SAW Narcissus in a portico
Leaning his ear toward the yellow bells
Of his own flower, festooned, that from the shells
Voluted on the pavement, caught the low
Long echoes of an Archipelago
Afar, beyond the pillared parallels
Wherein a soft wind wound, and nothing else,
Between his shoulder and the afterglow.

Figure of bronze! Thou listenest alway:
Ever for thee that lazy song beguiles.
But I must wake, and toil again, and pray;
And yet will come but rarely, and at whiles,
The shout and vision of the sea-gods grey,
Stampeding by the lone Scillonian isles.

HESPERUS

DOWN in the street the last late hansoms go
Still westward, but with backward eyes of red
The harlot shuffles to her lonely bed;
The tall policeman pauses but to throw
A flash into the empty portico;
Then he too passes, and his lonely tread
Links all the long-drawn gas-lights on a thread
And ties them to one planet swinging low.

O Hesperus! O happy star! to bend
O'er Helen's bosom in the trancèd west—
To watch the hours heave by upon her breast
And at her parted lip for dreams attend:
If dawn defraud thee, how shall I be deem'd,
Who house within that bosom, and am dreamed?

CHRISTMAS EVE

FRIEND, old friend in the Manse by the fireside sitting,
Hour by hour while the greyash drips from the log,
You with a book on your knee, your wife with her
knitting,

Silent both, and between you, silent, the dog.

Silent here in the South sit I; and, leaning,

One sits watching the fire, with chin upon hand;
Gazes deep in its heart—but ah! its meaning
Rather I read in the shadows and understand.

Dear, kind she is; and daily dearer, kinder,

Love shuts the door on the lamp and our two selves:
Not my stirring awakened the flame that behind her
Lit up a face in the leathern dusk of the shelves.

Veterans are my books, with tarnished gilding:

Yet there is one gives back to the winter grate
Gold of a sunset flooding a college building,
Gold of an hour I waited—as now I wait—

For a light step on the stair, a girl's low laughter,

Rustle of silk, shy knuckles tapping the oak,
Dinner and mirth upsetting my rooms and, after,
Music, waltz upon waltz, till the June day broke.

Where is her laughter now? Old tarnished covers—

You that reflect her with fresh young face un-
changed—

Christmas Eve

Tell that we met, that we parted, not as lovers;
Time, chance, brought us together, and these
estranged.

Loyal were we to the mood of the moment granted,
Bruised not its bloom, but danced on the wave of its
joy:

Passion—wisdom—fell back like a fence enchanted,
Ringing a floor for us both—whole Heaven for the
boy!

Where is she now? Regretted not, though departed,
Blessings attend and follow her all her days!
—Look to your hound: he dreams of the hares he
started,
Whines, and awakes, and stretches his limbs to the
blaze.

Far old friend in the Manse, by the grey ash peeling
Flake by flake from the heat in the Yule log's core,
Look past the woman you love. On wall and ceiling
Climbs not a trellis of roses—and ghosts—of yore?

Thoughts, thoughts! Whistle them back like hounds
returning—

Mark how her needles pause at a sound upstairs.
Time for bed, and to leave the log's heart burning!
Give ye good-night, but first thank God in your
prayers!

CHILD'S CAROL

N^AKED boy, brown boy,
In the snow deep,
Piping, carolling
Folks out of sleep;
Little shoes, thin shoes,
All so wet and worn—
But I bring the merry news
—Christ is born!

Rise, pretty mistress!
Don a gay silk;
Give me for my good news
Bread and new milk.
Joy, joy in Jewry,
This very morn!
Far and far I carry it
—Christ is born!

Back, back in Bethl'em,
By the moon still,
There I saw a shepherd
Sitting on a hill:
'Boy,' said he, 'bonny boy,
Take you this horn,
Wend you now and wind it,
—Christ is born!'

Child's Carol

And whenever people
Hear the merry blast,
Bells in every steeple,
Flags on every mast,
Holy boughs and holly
Adore and adorn,
Far and far and jubilant
—Christ is born!

Therefore I would have you
People comprehend
Christ is born in Bethl'em
For to be your friend:
For to bear the agony,
For to wear the thorn,
For to die on Calvary,
—Christ is born!

CAROL

FLING out, fling out your windows wide!
I bring you joy this Christmas-tide:
To-day is born in Bethlehem
A son of royal David's stem:
Then sing and rest you satisfied—
In excelsis gloria!

'Where is the royal Babe arrayed?'
Lo! He is in a manger laid;
The Lord of life an ox's guest—
But warm He lies on Mary's breast?
Then sing and rest you undismayed.

'How may we find His manger-bed?'
There shines a star above His head;
And choirs of viewless Cherubin
Shall guide you to that humble inn:
Then sing and rest you comforted.

'And is it He that should be sent?'
Three kings came from the Orient
A-riding with the tokens three
From Ind, Cathay, and Arabye:
Then sing and rest you confident.

Carol

'What bringeth He, this new-born King?'

Lo! all good gifts there are to bring.

'Tis He shall turn your tears to mirth,

And send goodwill and peace on earth:

Then kneel, and rest you worshipping—

In excelsis gloria!

HOLY INNOCENTS

U^s Herod slew,
Willing to slay the infant Christ, our Lord.
But from the sword
Our tender life in globes of lighted dew
Trickled and twinkling ran
Before Him to the waste Egyptian,
Gilding His way like glow-worms on the sward.

Now in His house
He draweth us to deck the Christmas fir
From chest of myrrh;
Whom as Aunt Mary bindeth on the boughs,
Her eyes drop happy rain
For sorrow past—and lo! we live again
As babies trembling in the tears of her.

SONGS

NUPTIAL NIGHT

HUSH! and again the chatter of the starling
Athwart the lawn!
Lean your head close and closer, O my darling!—
It is the dawn.
Dawn in the dusk of her dream,
Dream in the hush of her bosom, uncloset
Bathed in the wakening beam,
Blush to her cheek, be a blossom, a rose!
Pass, purple Night, the floor of Ocean spilling
With scent and star,
To casements lit and luted music thrilling
By coasts afar.
Holy, thy hand on the rail,
Mother of Mystery, muting thy tread:
Loosen thy locks for a veil
Over the maiden to-morrow shall bed.
Go, nuptial night, my breast of hers bereaving!
Yet O, tread soft!
Come, golden day, the mountain shoulder heaving
More gold aloft!
Gold, rose, bird of the dawn
All to her aubade gather unseen.
Thrill thro' the curtain drawn,
Bathe her, bedeck her, behymn her, my Queen!

HELFORD RIVER

HELFORD RIVER, Helford River,
Blessed may ye be!
We sailed up Helford River
By Durgan from the sea.

O to hear the hawser chain
Rattle by the ferry there!
Dear, and shall we come again
By Bosahan,
By wood and water fair?

All the wood to ransack,
All the wave explore—
Moon on Calamansack,
Ripple on the shore.

—Laid asleep and dreaming
On our cabin beds;
Helford River streaming
By two happy heads;

—Helford River, streaming
By Durgan to the sea,
Much have we been dreaming
Since we dreamed by thee.

Helford River

Dear, and shall we dream again

The one dream there?

All may go if that remain

By Bosahan,

And the old face wear!

THE KERCHIEF

WHEN first I 'gan to know thee, dear,
Thy faults I did espy;
And 'Sure this is a blemish here,
And that's a blot,' said I.

But from that hour I did resign
My judgement to my fate,
Thou art no more than only mine
To love and vindicate.

The kerchief that thou gav'st I wear
Upon mine eyelids bound,
And every man I meet I dare
To find the faults I found.

‘TO THE LAND WHERE YE GO . . .’

To the land where ye go
Ye may not beckon me;
In the ranks ye shall know
Ye shall not reckon me.
On the earth ye did move
As deep below as high above
All our propoundings.
I cast a plummet in your love
And found no soundings.

Pools of heaven were your eyes;
Their deeps rejected not
One whom wide Paradise
Pitied, reflected not.
Was it time lost to lean
My longing lip toward the clean
Well-spring of healing,
Surprise the soul mine might have been,
And ponder, kneeling?

A FIDDLER'S VALENTINE

PRETTY player, from thy strings
Little whispers take them wings—
Take them wings and hie to me!
In my hollow heart they dwell
Swinging it as 'twere a bell
Ding-a-ding inside o' me.
Hand to play and heart to ring—
Together might they make a spring
On earth beyond imagining:
But nay, and nay—
For now my love's denied to me.
Therefore, dear, lay down thy fiddle,
Clip me once around the middle,
Kiss, and say good-bye to me!

MARY LESLIE

Before Vittoria, June 20, 1813

O MARY LESLIE, blithe and shrill
The bugles blew for Spain:
And you below the Castle Hill
Stood in the crowd your lane.
Then hearts were wild to watch us pass,
Yet laith to let us go!
While mine said, 'Fare-ye-well, my lass!'
And yours, 'God keep my jo!'

Here by the bivouac fire, above
These fields of savage play,
I'll lift my love to meet thy love
Twa thousand miles away,
Where yonder, yonder by the stars,
Nightlong there rins a burn,
And maids with lovers at the wars
May list their wraiths' return.

More careless yet my spirit grows
Of fame, more sick of blood:
But I can think of Badajoz,
And yet that God is good.

Mary Leslie

Beyond the siege, beyond the stour,
Beyond the sack of towns,
I reach to pluck ae lily-floo'r
Where leaders press for crowns.

O Mary! lily! bow'd and wet
With mair than mornin's rain!
The bugles up the Lawnmarket
Shall sound us home again.
Then fare-ye-well, these foreign lands,
And be damn'd their bitter drouth,
With your dear face between my hands
And the cup held to my mouth,
My love,
That clean cup to my mouth!

THE LAMP AND THE GUITAR

MY love, she lives in Salamanca
All up a dozen flights of stairs;
There with the sparrows night and morning
Under the roof she chirps her prayers.
They say her wisdom comes from heaven—
So near the clouds and chimneys meet—
I rather think Luisa's sparrows
Fetch it aloft there from the street!

What would you have? In la Verdura
All the day long she keeps a stall:
Students, bachelors buy her nosegays,
Given with a look and—well that's all!
King of her love, with no Prime Minister,
Lord of an attic blithe I'd reign,
But *ay de mi!* from here to Finisterre
Pretty Luisa loves all Spain.

Pretty Luisa's democratic:
Every peseta wears its crown.
What is it worth to rent an attic
If on the world you don't look down?
Go, silly boy, believe you first with her—
Twenty at once she'll entertain.
Why love a mistress and be curst with her?
Copy Luisa—love all Spain!

THE MARINE

(POITEVIN)

THE bold Marine comes back from war,
So kind:

The bold Marine comes back from war,
So kind:

With a raggety coat and a worn-out shoe.
'Now, poor Marine, say, whence come you,
All so kind?'

'I travel back from the war, madame,
So kind:

I travel back from the war, madame,
So kind:

For a glass of wine and a bowl of whey,
'Tis I will sing you a ballad gay,
All so kind.'

The bold Marine he sips his whey,
So kind:

He sips and he sings his ballad gay,
So kind:

But the dame she turns toward the wall,
To wipe her tears that fall and fall,
All so kind.

The Marine

‘What aileth you at my song, madame,
So kind?’

I hope that I sing no wrong, madame,
So kind?

Or grieves it you a beggar should dine
On a bowl of whey and the good white wine,
All so kind?’

‘It ails me not at your ballad gay,
So kind:

It ails me not for the wine and whey,
So kind:

But it ails me sore for the voice and eyes
Of a good man long in Paradise.—
Ah, so kind!’

‘You have fair children five, madame,
So kind:

You have fair children five, madame,
So kind:

Your good man left you children three;
Whence came these twain for company,
All so kind?’

‘A letter came from the war, Marine,
So kind:

A letter came from the war, Marine,
So kind:

The Marine

A while I wept for the good man dead,
But another good man in a while I wed,
All so kind.'

The bold Marine he drained his glass,
So kind:

The bold Marine he drained his glass,
So kind.

He said not a word, though the tears they flowed,
But back to his regiment took the road,
All so kind.

IA'S SONG

LONG before day I left my father's cottage,
I went by the tamarisks upon the hedges by the sea,
Seeking my lovely one, my comforter, before the
morning.

My brothers three lie drowned by Dolor Oogo.
They call in the night: 'Little sister, when is the wed-
ding?
It is cold waiting, and thou a drudge in our father's
cottage.'

Now must I go and whisper them 'Not yet'—
Not yet; but the thyme of the hedge kisses my naked
foot—
So will he kiss me soon, and comfort me, my pretty
lover.

Then will I kneel by him, and he shall bandage
The wounds of the brambles, and I, kneeling beside
him,
Softly, my arm holding his waist, will kiss him—ah,
when?

MANATON

O it's Manaton, little Manaton, high over th
Moor—

And I led my love to Manaton, and she twenty-four:

O I took my love to Manaton, and I twenty-five—

An' 'tis that's the pretty time-o'-life for young men t
wive.

O 'twas walking back from Manaton, half-way to th
Cleeve,

By the stones of Becky Waterfall my love touched m
sleeve—

'Ah, to-day has been the honey-day if 'tweren't for th
pain

That you and I and Manaton might ne'er meet again!

O it's Manaton, little Manaton, bides there just th
same:

But 'twas yesterday, to Manaton alone as I came,

That I turned in sight of Manaton, my heart moidered s

For the want of her and Manaton, and the long whil
ago.

TWO DUETS

From 'Arion', an unpublished Masque

I

- He.* **A**GLAI-A! Aglai-a!
 Sweet, awaken and be glad.
- She.* Who is this that calls Aglaia?
 Is it thou, my dearest lad?
- He.* 'Tis Arion, 'tis Arion,
 Who calls thee from sleep—
 From slumber who bids thee
 To follow and number
 His kids and his sheep.
- She.* Nay, leave to entreat me!
 If mother should spy on
 Us twain, she would beat me.
- He.* Then come, my love, come!
 And hide with Arion
 Where green woods are dumb!
- She.* Ar-i-on! Ar-i-on!
 Closer, list! I am afraid!
- He.* Whisper, then, thy love Arion,
 From thy window, lily maid.
- She.* Yet Aglaia, yet Aglaia
 Hath heard them debate

Two Duets

Of wooing repenting—

‘Who trust to undoing,

Lament them too late.’

He. Nay, nay, when I woo thee,

Thy mother might spy on

All harm I shall do thee.

She. I come, then—I come!

To follow Arion

Where green woods be dumb.

SONG

Sparrow of Love, so sharp to peck,

Arrow of Love—I bare my neck

Down to the bosom. See, no fleck

Of blood! I have never a wound; I go

Forth to the greenwood. Yet, heigh-ho!

What ’neath my girdle flutters so?

’Tis not a bird, and yet hath wings,

’Tis not an arrow, yet it stings;

While in the wound it nests and sings—

Heigh-ho!

He. Of Arion, of Arion

That wound thou shalt learn;

What nothings ’tis made of,

And soft pretty soothings

In shade of the fern.

Two Duets

She. When maids have a mind to,
Man's word they rely on,
Old warning are blind to—
I come, then—I come
To walk with Arion
Where green woods are dumb!

II

He. Dear my love, and O my love,
And O my love so lately
Did we wander yonder grove
And sit awhile sedately?
For either you did there conclude
To do at length as I did,
Or passion's fashion's turn'd a prude,
And troth's an oath derided.

She. Yea, my love—and nay, my love—
And ask me not to tell, love,
While I delay'd an idle day
What 'twixt us there befell, love.
Yet either I did sit beside
And do at length as you did,
Or my delight is lightly by
An idle lie deluded!

COLUMBUS AT SEVILLE

DEAR son, Diego, I am old and deaf:
Here to my room in Seville some one came
—To-day or yesterday, who knows? The blinds
Are closed, and no sun moves upon the floor—
Here to my room in Seville some one came
And muttered that the Queen is dead. I trust
She rests in glory, far from all the cares
Of this rough world she made less penible
For two much-travelled feet that here inert
Wait by the ripple of the Blessèd Ford,
Yet may not to its running cool unlace
Until my Master give the happy word.

I have been loyal: flouted for a fool,
I have been loyal: lifted above lords,
I have been loyal: once again abased,
Beggared and led a prisoner in chains,
I have been loyal still. But I believe
God sets on kings His sigil for a test,
And only they who bear it to His bourne
By widows' tears uncanceled, without scratch
Of fetters wrongfully imposed, undimmed
By sighs of just petitioners, may claim
To hear their charter yonder reconfirmed.
Who fails—his province shall another take,

Columbus at Seville

One chosen from the spirits of just men
Made perfect. And his own debt shall every one
Here or hereafter, soon or late, redeem.
Who plights his dignity against a debt,
As Ferdinand; who thus evades a debt,
As Ferdinand, and forfeits faith of man;
Shall find that faith confront him by the Throne
In angels' blushes, and his honours melt
For payment in their slow celestial scorn.

But she, my Mistress, diadem of all
His dignity, was never Ferdinand's.
Born of that royal few who ride abroad
And see their humbler, happier sisters throw
Free glances from their windows on the street;
Or by the bridge or by the bathing-pool
Passing with nun-like faces, catch a hint
And bear it home and wonder all the night
Stretched by their lords, listing the serenades
That well by distant balconies passionate;
She—though her priestess' body she abased
Coldly to public need—lent it to wed
Castille with Aragon—was devotee
To none but duty. On this earth she knew
No passion but a friendship purified,
Unspotted of the flesh, prophetic
Of that sublimer passion of the saints
Her innocence now inherits.—Not for me!

Columbus at Seville

As not for Ferdinand! But this I hope—
To meet her walking 'neath the boughs of Life,
To touch her hand without servility,
And in the salutation of her eyes
Read resolution of the musing care
That clouded them aforetime, half with doubt
And half with pitiful knowledge.

Oh, they swept
Down from the daïs eloquent, wave on wave!
In every wave brooded a starry thought;
In every thought brooded a litten tongue,
Holy, with comfortable words. And yet
I have looked into them as a mother looks,
And in the iris of her week-old babe
Reads now but natal innocence, and now
The absorbèd wisdom of an age-worn past
Blinking its own new dawn. They did allow
The wonder of man's weakness, even while
They pierced unto his greatness and the hope.

Nathless at first I did believe her cold
—Jesu! She cold!—cold as the icèd rim
'Engaged my hot heart there by Pinos bridge.
Tight-corded as my holster was the bale,
The slender bale of hope I carried then,
If somewhere I might find the world so wide
As to contain one courage bold to mate

Columbus at Seville

With me to push it wider—wide enough
To satisfy the more adventurous clans
Yet in the womb waiting the moment's call.
For Portugal had cheated, England sent
No word, and of Bartholomew no report
Came on the wandermost tales of them who drew
Forth from the northern fogs in caravel
Galley or barque or pinnace. Day by day
For two long years, seated among my books,
Maps, charts, and cross-staves, in the little shop
By Seville bridge, incessant I had watched
The Guadalquiver through a dusty pane;
Had watched the thin mast creep around the point;
Had watched the slow hull warp across the tide,
And the long flank fall lazy to the quay
—Levantine traders bringing Tyrian wine,
Malmsey from Crete, fine lawn of Cyprus, silk
Of Egypt and of India; Genovese,
Whose sheer I conned and knew the shipwright's
name
—Feluccas, with a world of eastern spice
Bartered of Caspian merchants on the bar
Of Poti, or of Emosaïd clans
Down the Red Sea and south to Mozambique:
True aloes of Socotra, galbanum,
Myrrh, cassia, rhubarb, scented calamus,
Sweet storax, cinnamon, attars of the rose

Columbus at Seville

And jasmine. And of some the skippers wore
Skin purses belted underneath their knives
—Spoilers of Ormuz or of Serendib,
Who sought the jeweller's offices ere they slept
Or drank ashore. These from the sunrise all:
But others from the dark and narrow seas
By England and by Flanders. Tin they brought
In blocks and bars, and lead and pewter-ware
Shipped at Southampton; Lace and napery
Of Ypres and of Malines; Frankish wools
In bulk from Calais' warehouses; or spun
By English hands, grey kersey, fustian, cloth,
From Guildford, Norwich, London.—

Ay, but none

Brought tidings of Bartholomew. One and all,
Still to my questioning the shipmen stared
And shook their silver earrings: not a word!
Oft—as the Orcadian watcher from his rock
Scans the grey tide-race eddying by his line—
In tavern corner by an empty cup
I have heard the reboant captains boast and swell;
Alert, if haply, on vainglorious tale
Or outland lie reported, there might drift
Some flotsam of the dim West unexplored.
Bird of my hope! How long ye beat a wing
In yon unfathomable fogs, and still

Columbus at Seville

Of green no sign!—the waters ever void,
No token, no retrieve of Noë's dove!

At Salamanca then they tested us;
Churchmen and schoolmen and cosmogoners
In council. 'Hey!' and 'What?' 'The earth a sphere?
And two ways to Cathaia?' 'Tut and tush!'
'Feared the Cathaians then no blood in the head
From walking upside-down?' 'Pray did I know
Of a ship 'would sail up-hill?' 'Had I not heard
Perchance of latitudes where the wheel of the sun
Kept the sea boiling? Of the tropic point
Where white men turned hop-skip to blackamoors?'
'And hark ye, sir, to what Augustine says,
And here is Cosmas' map. "*God built the world
As a tabernacle: sky for roof and sides,
And earth for flooring . . . Made all men to dwell
Upon the face of it*"—the face, you hear,
Not several faces—"On foundations laid
The earth abides"—*foundations*, if you please,
Not mid-air. Soothly, sir, at your conceits
We smile, but warn you that they lie not far
On this side heresy. "Antipodes," hey?
Our Mother Church annuls the Antipodes.'

Fools, fools, Diego! Ay, but folly makes
More orphans than malevolence.

Columbus at Seville

There I stood
Rejected, and the good Queen looked on me.
She did not smile. Thank God she did not smile!
She did not speak. I saw the mute lips move
Compassionate, and took defeat, went forth.

Nay, no compassion now! With scorn of men
I bound my wound, and nursed it while I rode.
France now, or England? Still the wound complained,
And still I closed the purple lips with scorn;
Till there on Pinos bridge my horses hoof
Rang, and the vaulted echo halloa'd 'Scorn!'
And so—

I do remember, on a time,
Off Cape St. Vincent in a general fight,
How that one master of a sinking hull
—An Antwerp captain—danced about his deck
Like paper in a gale, and cursed and bawled,
And cursed again and shook his fist and bawled,
Belabouring his gunners—fat and fierce
As a fool's bladder, wholly ludicrous;
Till running to the bulwarks, all aflush
To hurl some late-remembered oath, he leaned,
Collapsed in bloody vomit, and so died.

So with the bridge's echo welled afresh
My wound above its bandages. I lit

Columbus at Seville

Down from my horse and o'er the parapet bowed
In sickness of surrender; let my hopes
Unhusk in tears upon the silly stream
That ran ecstatic, with a babbling lip
A-flush for the salt tide, and knew not yet
The smart of that embrace. 'Run, happy fool!
Aspire to make impression on the main,
'Will swallow thee with all thy freshet wave
As kings digest the tributary zeal
Of private men, and so spit forth their names.'

So leaned I, listless to a gallop of hoofs
'Woke distant on the north-east road and swept
Down in a smother of dust. I sprang to the bit,
And backed to let the posting rider past.
But he reined sudden and wheeled. 'Why this will be
—Steady, thou sprawler!—this will be the man,
The Genovese himself! Sir, I have ridden—
The Queen commands you back to Santa Fé.
Plague o' this dust!' I looked him up and down:
A little dapper gentleman of the camp,
Flicking with scented kerchief at his coat
Of velvet laced with amber, like a bee's,
And condescending with a silly smile.
And still he smiled; and still I pondered him,
As a father, listening in his closet, hears
The first cry of his first-born child, and turns

Columbus at Seville

To watch an idle bee upon the pane,
And still in the midwife's message hears it buzz.
'The Queen commands—' 'So—I believe you, sir':
Then slower: 'And I will trust the Queen.'
With eyebrows lifted, and a brisk salute,
He shook his rein, dug spur, and started back
A-trot with the answer.

Haste, O bobbing bee!

Be minister of marriage 'twixt two minds,
Two flowers that twine the challenge of their gaze
And know no fleshlier union. Soar, O bee!
Hence from the moat up, up to the lady-flower
Swaying in sunlight high on the palace wall;
Creep in her leaning languid bosom, and there
Do thy close work, whisper, impregnate her
With a secret such as lowlier blossoms breathe
At twilight, one to another, nodding anigh
With petalled nightcaps, while th' eaves-dropping
 breeze
Steals by the lily-bordered garden beds.
Nay; 'tis a chaster deed thou hast in hand
—To marry mind with mind. Stand but afar
And speak: thou hast a word that not alone
Will breed conception of a queenly thought,
But wake the generations of the world.
Dame of the castle! Leman of the road!
Leap with the quickening babe and press your side!

Columbus at Seville

He hath the resurrection in his heel,
Treads underfoot the doom of all his sires,
And springs upon the tight cords wherewithal
In turn they bound each other to the pit.
Dame of the castle! Leman of the road!
Enlarge your girdles!—for this conquering babe
Shall westward launch and draw with silver wake
An honourable girdle round the waist
Of Mother Earth, beneath her swelling breasts—
The Old World and the New. O moons of man!
A Spirit moves upon the middle deeps,
And all their odic tides acclaim the Babe!

Back then I rode: but coolly Reason came
With sight of Santa Fé, and plucked my rein—
‘Be temperate: for kings have many cares
And thou one vision only. See these walls,
These tented lines; and yonder on the cliff,
At her last gasp, Granada! Tranquilly,
As ’twere on oilèd hinge, the sentinel
Paces her terrace. Evening for her wounds
Hath golden ointment, were they curable.
But at their meat the dusky councillors
Mutter “To-morrow!” and upon the wall
The whisperers surmise. “To-morrow? Ay—
There dawns one only morrow for the Moor!”
But O, what blood! O man, what hammer-blows

Columbus at Seville

Have built that morrow! Christendom redeems
The debt, attains the dream. O give her space,
A kindly space before she dream again!

Soberly then I cleansed me of the dust
Of travel; stood within the royal tent
With brow composed. And she with brow composed
Questioned my hope as 'twere i' the level round
Of a Queen's audience. Cold? I did not know
She had sought to pledge her jewels for that hope!
Only her tone took up the challenge flung
By my obeisance, challenging in turn
Her Court, as who should say, 'Behold this man,
He offers a new heaven, a new earth;
And claims to hold them for us, taking tithe
As Governor, and for his share one-eighth
Of his adventure's profit, with the style
Of Admiral of the Ocean, privilege
As high as our High Admiral's of Castile:
Well worth it, an his promises bear fruit.
I test him at the furthest of his claim—
Go, sir—so much an unbelieving world
Concedes its Queen: derisive lets her launch
Fresh hopes forlorn upon its unbelief—
Go, sir, and prove the courage of thy faith.'

And Faith, my son, the substance is of things
Hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Columbus at Seville

The substance? ay, I trod it!—not the deck,
The barren deck whereon my comrades cursed
The wind, the smooth sea running like a stream
Still westward, westward through an empty world.
Nay, while they cursed, my feet already pressed
The yellow sands, waded the rivulets
And long cool grasses of those isles afar.
The evidence? I saw it!—not the weed,
The crab, the berried branch, the emperor-fish,
The tropic birds that sang about the mast
As 'twere a sweet-briar bursting into bud
In Seville, in the Andalusian spring.
—Signs and a *sursum corda* for the faint
And faithless. Sudden then a few would crowd
Forward, and point, and hail the dull blue smear
Far on the sky-line. 'News, Lord Admiral!
A land-fall, ho! and luck be with the news!'
—So watch it fade, and curse more bitterly.
Me neither hope nor omen, true or false,
Elated or depressed. Always I bore
The certainty within me, and the seal
Of God upon it, and the face imposed
Of her, my Mistress. Always on the poop,
A man apart, I stood and steered a course
Unerring, by the magnet of my doom.
Others might watch, all eager for the prize—
The thirty annual crowns and velvet coat—

Columbus at Seville

For veritable sight and news of land.
The *Pinta* might outsail, the *Nina* balk
Their Admiral. But still for him reserved
The hour, and for his eyes the blessed light,
The light on Guanahani! Musing there,
Through the first watch, beside the cabin top,
I heard between me and the hornèd moon
A frigate-bird go whistling, and a wind
Caught in the rigging like a woman's sigh:
Whereat I turned——O face! O flash of eyes!
O star of my devotion! all dissolved
Into a spark that danced and disappeared,
And dancing glowed again, as 'twere a torch
Moved in a village street from door to door!
I called the watch. They had not seen: but ran,
Stared, saw——'Land! land!' and 'Praise the Admiral!
Who found us light in darkness? Who but he?'
—More proof? Then rede thee of that bitter gale
Off the Azores, on the homeward road.
The *Nina* drove alone in seas that drowned
Hope and the very heaven. There we cast
Lots who should carry—barefoot, in his sark—
A candle to Our Lady of Guadalupe.
Who drew the lot but I? Again we cast.
And who but I the pilgrim to Moguer,
To Santa Clara? Yea, yet once again
A night of anguish off the Tagus mouth;

Columbus at Seville

Again the lot; again the Admiral!
Me must Our Lady of La Cinta choose:
There was none other. Proofs? I tell thee, son,
There was none other! These men handled ropes,
Starved, hoped, shed tears—mechanical, for me
Their master. As I meted them, they moved.
But Pinzon—who betrayed me once and twice
At Cuba—thought us foundered in the gale,
Nor stayed to search; but made his hope, his shame,
Both doubled by desertion—who, with sail
Piled high as both, let drive the *Pinta* home
To bear the first report and snatch the prize—
I swear I pitied him. How like to mine
His hope, if mine had lacked the single grace
Made his contention impotent! lacking which,
He smote upon a consecrated shield
That on the stroke rang God's authentic 'No!'

Thou knowest how upon a mid-day tide
We drew unto that port of our desire;
To Palos, little Palos, left so long,
After what wonders found! and all the roofs
Rocked, and the mist of faces on the quay
Heaved, and the anchor dropped, and home was home.
Thou knowest how, that moment looking back,
We saw a lean hull creeping past the bar—
The *Pinta*!—never spoken since the Azores!

Columbus at Seville

And Pinzon—traitor, by an hour too late!
Always I pitied him. He had designed
To post to Barcelona with the news:
Now heard the royal mandate, ‘Never come
But with the Admiral thou shouldst have served.’
Whereat he turned him to his native town,
To his own house; there on the threshold pushed
By wife and children, mounted to his room,
And turned the key, and knew his hour, and died.

But *my* reward, how came it?

Proud enough
That hour in Barcelona; the April sky
Shaken with bells and cannon and flame of flags;
The cheers, the craning heads, the blossoms thrown
And kerchiefs from the windows fluttering,
Flock after flock, like doves let forth to greet
The dusty golden pageant—Juan first,
The Pilot, with the Standard of Castile:
The slow brown Indians in their feather cloaks
And paint: the seamen bearing fruit and palms,
Parrots and gold-fish, conchs and turtle-shells,
Lizards on poles, lign-aloes, trays of spice,
And gold in calabashes: last of all
The Admiral. So, they led me to the throne,
Where she and Ferdinand rose, as to a prince,
And hardly would permit me kiss their hands:

Columbus at Seville

But seated me beside them, bade me tell
All our adventures—rarely smiled the Queen—
‘Yea, all,’ she said. In the great circle’s hush,
Beneath the canopy of cloth-of-gold,
I found my voice and spake—‘Most Catholic King,
And thou, Star-regent of our enterprise,
Sooner than half were told, this April night
Would shake the planets from her dusky wings
Down-hovering. Yet an hour shall tell enough
To tune all tongues to anthems praising God.’
So for an hour I told the tale; and twice
Paused: but insistent she commanded ‘More!’
Leaning with parted lip and kindling cheek,
As might the Carthaginian, had no drought
Of passion parched her throat, have leaned to drink
Of Troy’s immortal wanderer. Was it then
Came my reward?

Not then, nor ever so.
But long years after, when that dream was grey,
And the heart wise, and fellowship was none
(For ’tis the curse of greatness, to outgrow
All friends and from the lone height long for friends,
And falling, find the friends it left all gone),
—Years afterward, when black was favour’s torch
And faith took bribes; when Ferdinand betrayed,
And Bobadilla, High Commissioner,

Columbus at Seville

Foamed at his lunatic height, raged like a beast,
Cast us in chains, shipped us like bees to Spain—
Then, from the pit of that most brutal fall
A voice commanded 'Break his chains! He shall
In person stand before us, plead his cause.'

Carefully then I dressed me as became
The Admiral of the Ocean. Squire and page
And retinue—I did abate no jot
While the purse bled. A prince, and all a prince,
I passed between the sneering chamber crowd,
The whispering abjects of the ante-rooms,
Into the presence: stood there, cold, erect.
'I am Columbus. I have left my chains
Nailed at my bed's head by the crucifix:
And come to know what further, O my King?'
Then Ferdinand—I saw him bite his lip—
Sat with pink face averted. But the Queen
Rose from her throne, silent—I would have knelt;
Too late! She stretched her hands and, silent yet,
Gazed, and the world fell from us, and we wept—
We two, together . . .
Ah, blessed hands! Ah, blessed woman's hands—
Stretched to undo irreparable wrong!
Yea, the more blest being all impotent!
A Queen's I had not touched: but hers met mine
In humbleness across man's common doom,
In sadness and in wisdom beyond pride.

Columbus at Seville

They are cold beside her now, and cannot stir.
Further than I have travelled she hath fared:
But I shall follow. Soon will come the call:
And I shall grip the tiller once again.
The purple night shall heave upon the floor
Mile after mile; the dawn invade the stars,
The stars the dawn—how long? And following down
The moon's long ripple, I shall hear again
The frigate-bird go whistling—see the flash—
The light on Guanahani! Salvador!
Let thy Cross flame upon me in that star,
And from that Cross outstretch *her* sainted hands!

My son, they tell me that the Queen is gone . . .
I trust she rests in glory, free from all
The cares of this rough world. She was my friend:
And I shall find it harder now to treat
With Ferdinand. He fends me off with words.
I thought that last petition ill prepared;
And have an ampler one; drawn up and signed
To-day, or yesterday—who knows? The blinds
Are closed, and no sun moves upon the floor.

TO
CHARLES THURSBY
THE 'ONLIE BEGETTER'

THE REGENT
A DRAMA IN ONE ACT

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CARL'ANTONIO, *Duke of Adria*

TONINO, *his young son*

LUCIO, *Count of Vallescura, brother to the Duchess*

CESARIO, *Captain of the Guard*

GAMBA, *a Fool*

OTTILIA, *Duchess and Regent of Adria*

LUCETTA, *a Lady-in-Waiting*

FULVIA, *a Lady of the Court*

*Courtiers, Priests, Choristers, Soldiers, Mariners,
Townsfolk, etc.*

The Scene is the Ducal Palace of Adria, in the N. Adriatic

The Date, 1571

THE REGENT

SCENE.—*A terraced courtyard before the Ducal Palace. Porch and entrance of Chapel, R. A semicircular balcony, L., with balustrade and marble seats, and an opening whence a flight of steps leads down to the city. The city lies out of sight below the terrace; from which, between cypresses and statuary, is seen a straight stretch of a canal; beyond the canal are sand-hills and the line of the open sea. Mountains, L., dip down to the sea and form a curve of the coast.*

As the curtain rises, a crowd of town and country folk is being herded to the back of the terrace by the Ducal Guard, under Cesario. Within the Chapel, to the sound of an organ, boys' voices are chanting the service of the Mass.

Cesario, Gamba the Fool, Guards, Populace.

Cesario. Way there! Give room! The Regent comes from Mass.

Guards, butt them on the toes—way there! give room!

Prick me that laggard's leg—importunate fools!

Guards. Room for the Regent! Room!

[The sacring bell rings within the Chapel.]

The Regent

Cesario.

Hark there, the bell!

[*A pause. Men of the crowd take off their caps.*

Could ye not leave, this day of all the year,
Your silly suits, petitions, quarrels, pleas?
Could ye not leave, this once in seven years,
Our Lady to come holy-quiet from Mass,
Lean on the wall, and loose her cage-bird heart,
To lift and breast and dance upon the breeze
Draws home her lord the Duke?

Crowd.

Long live the Duke!

Cesario. The devil, then! Why darken his approach?

Gamba (*from the bench where he has been mending his viol*). Because, Captain, 'tis a property knaves and fools have in common—to stand in their own light, as 'tis of soldiers to talk bad logic. That knave, now—he with the red nose and the black eye—the Duke's colours, loyal man!—you clap an iron on his leg, and ask him why he is not down in the city, hanging them out of window! But there!—you are a soldier!

Cesario. And you a Fool, and on your own showing stand in your own light.

Gamba. Nay, neither in my own light, nor as a Fool. So should myself stand between the sun and my shadow; whereas I am not myself—these seven years have I been but the shadow of a Fool. Yet, to keep my hand in, must I practise this nonsense for which I draw my pay, and so purge my sick soul with surfeit

The Regent

even in Confessional. Pah! (*To his viol*) But come, old limmer—frayed loyalty—we must tune up for the Duke! (*Strikes his viol and sings.*)

‘Bird of the South, my Rondinello——’

Flat—Flat!

Cesario (*calling up to watchman on the Chapel roof*). Ho, there! What news?

A Voice. Captain, no sail!

Cesario. Where sits

The wind?

Voice. Nor’ west, and north a point!

Cesario. Perchance

They have down’d sail and creep around the flats.

Gamba (*tuning his viol*). Flats, flats! the straight horizon, and the life

These seven years laid by rule! The curst canal

Drawn level through the drawn-out level sand

And thistle-tufts that stink as soon as pluck’d!

Give me the hot crag and the dancing heat,

Give me the Abruzzi, and the cushioned thyme—

Brooks at my feet, high glittering snows above.

What were thy music, viol, without a ridge?

[*Noise of commotion in the city below.*]

Cesario. Watchman, what news?

A Voice. Sir, on the sea no sail!

One of the Crowd. But through the town below a horseman spurs—

The Regent

I think, Count Lucio! Yes—Count Lucio!

He hears, draws rein, dismounts!

Cesario. Sure, he brings news.

Gamba. I think he brings word the Duke is sick; his loyal folk have drunk so much of his health.

[A murmur has been growing in the town below. It breaks into cheers as Count Lucio comes springing up to the terrace.]

Enter Lucio.

Lucio. News! Where's the Regent? Eh? is Mass not said?

Cesario, news! I rode across the dunes;

A pilot—Nestore—you know the man—

Came panting. Sixteen sail beyond the point!

That's not a galley lost!

Crowd. Long live the Duke!

Lucio. Hark to the tocsin! I have carried fire—

Wildfire! Why, where's my sister? I've a mind——

[He strides towards the door of the Chapel; but pauses at the sound of chanting within, and comes back to Cesario.]

Man, are you mute? I say the town's aflame

Below! But here, up here, you stand and stare

Like prisoners loosed to daylight. Rub your eyes,

Believe!

Cesario (musing). It has been long.

Lucio.

As tapestry

The Regent

Pricked out by women's needles; point-device
As saints in fitted haloes. Yet they stab,
Those needles. Oh, the devil take their tongues!

Cesario. Why, what's the matter?

Lucio. P'st! another lie
Against the Countess Fulvia; and the train
Laid to my sister's ear. *Cesario,*
My sister is a saint—and yet she married:
Therefore should understand . . . Would saints, like
cobblers,
Stick but to business in this naughty world!
Ah, well! the Duke comes home.

Cesario. And what of that?

Lucio. Release!

Cesario. Release?

Lucio (mocking a chant within the Chapel). From priests
and petticoats
Deliver us, Good Lord!

Gamba (strikes a chord on viol). AMEN!

Cesario. Count Lucio,
These seven years ago, when the Duke sailed,
You were a child—a pretty, forward boy;
And I a young lieutenant of the Guard,
Burning to serve abroad. But that day, rather,
I clenched my nails over an inward wound:
For that a something manlier than my years—
Look, bearing, what-not—by the Duke not miss'd,

The Regent

Condemned me to promotion: I must bide
At home, command the Guard! 'Tis an old hurt,
But scalded on my memory. . . . Well—they sailed!
And from the terrace here, sick with self-pity,
Wrapped in my wrong, forgetful of devoir,
I watch'd them through a mist—turned with a
sob—

Uptore my rooted sight——

There, there she stood;
Her hand press'd to her girdle, where the babe
Stirred in her body while she gazed—she gazed—
But slowly back controlled her eyes, met mine;
So—with how wan, how small, how brave a smile!—
Reached me her hands to kiss . . .

O royal hands!

What burdens since they have borne let Adria tell.

But hear me swear by them, Count Lucio—

Who slights our Regent throws his glove to me.

Lucio. Why, soothly, she's my sister!

Cesario.

'But the Court

Is dull? No masques, few banquetings—and prayers
Be long, and youth for pastime leaps the gate?'

Yet if the money husbanded on feasts

Have fed our soldiery against the Turk,

Year after year, and still the State not starved;

Was't not well done? And if, responsible

To God, and lonely, she has leaned on God

The Regent

Too heavily for our patience, was't not wise?—
And well, though weary?

Lucio. I tell you, she's my sister!

Cesario. Well, an you will, bridle on that. Lord Lucio,
You named the Countess Fulvia. To my sorrow,
Two hours ago I called on her and laid her
Under arrest.

Lucio. The devil! For what?

Cesario. For that
A lady, whose lord keeps summer in the hills
To nurse a gouty foot, should penalize
His dutiful return by shutting doors
And hanging out a ladder made of rope,
Or prove its safety by rehearsing it
Upon a heavier man.

Lucio. I'll go to her.

Oh, this is infamous!

Cesario. Nay, be advised:

No hardship irks the lady, save to sit
At home and feed her sparrows; nor no worse
Annoy than from her balcony to spy
(Should the eye rove) a Switzer of the Guard
At post between her raspberry-canes, to watch
And fright the thrushes from forbidden fruit.

Lucio. Infamous! infamous!

Cesario. Enough, my lord:
The Regent!

The Regent

[*Doors of the Chapel open. The organ sounds, with voices of choir chanting the recessional. The Court enters from Mass, attending the Regent Ottilia and her son Tonino. She wears a crown and heavy dalmatic. Her brother Lucio, controlling himself, kisses her hand and conducts her to the marble bench, which serves for her Chair of State. She bows, receiving the homage of the crowd; but, after seating herself, appears for a few moments unconscious of her surroundings. Then, as her rosary slips from her fingers and falls heavily at her feet, she speaks.*

Regent. So slips the chain linking this world with
Heaven,

And drops me back to earth: so slips the chain
That hangs my spirit to the Redeemer's cross
Above pollution in the pure swept air
Whereunder frets this hive: so slips the chain—
(*She starts up*)—God! the dear sound! Was that his
anchor dropped?

Speak to the watchman, one! Call to the watch!
What news?

Cesario. Aloft! What news?

Voice above. No sail as yet!

Regent. Ah, pardon, sirs! My ears are strung to-day,
And play false airs invented by the wind.
Methought a hawse-pipe rattled . . .

The Regent

Gamba (chants to his viol).

Shepherds, see—

Lo! What a mariner love hath made me!

Regent. What chants the Fool?

Gamba.

Madonna, 'tis a trifle

Made by a silly poet on wives that stand

All night at windows listening the surf—

Now he comes! Will he come? Alas! no, no!

Lucio. Peace, Lively! Madam, there is news—brave news!

I'm from the watch-house. There the pilots tell

Of sixteen sail to the southward! Sixteen sail,

And nearing fast!

Regent.

Praise God! dear Lucio!

[She has seated herself again. She takes Lucio's hand and speaks, petting it.]

What? Glowing with my happiness? That's like you.

But for yourself the hour, too, holds release.

Lucio (between sullenness and shame, with a glance at Cesario). 'Release?'

Regent.

You will forgive? I have great need

To be forgiven. Sadly I have been slack

In guardianship, and by so much betrayed

My promise to our mother's passing soul.

Myself in cares immersed, I left the child

Among his toys—and turn to find you man—

But yet so much a boy that boyhood can

The Regent

(*Wistfully*) Laugh in your honest eyes? Forgive me,
Lucio!

Tell me, whate'er have slackened, there has slipped
No knot of love. To-morrow we'll make sport,
Be playmates and invent new games, and old—
Wreath flowers for crowns——

[*He drags his hand away. She gazes at him wistfully, and turns to the Captain of the Guard.*

Cesario,

What are the suits?

Cesario. They are but three to-day,
Madonna. First, a scoundrel here in irons
For having struck the Guard.

Regent (eyeing the culprit). His name, I think,
Is Donatello Crocco. Hey? You improve,
Good man. The last time 'twas your wife you basted.
At this rate, in another year or two
You'll bang the Turk. Do you confess the assault?

Prisoner. I do.

Regent. Upon a promise we dismiss you.
Your tavern, as it comes into our mind,
Is the 'Three Cups.' So many, and no more,
You'll drink to-day—have we your word? Three
cups,
And each a *Viva* for the Duke's return.

Prisoner. Your Highness, I'll not take it at the price
Of my good manners. I'm a gallant man:

The Regent

And who in Adria calls 'Three cheers for the Duke!'
But adds a fourth for the Duchess? Lady, nay;
Grant me that fourth, or back I go to the cells!

[*The Regent laughs and nods to the Guard to release him.*

Regent. What next?

An Old Woman (very rapidly). Your Highness will not
know me—Zia

Agnese, Giovannucci's wife that was;
And feed a two-three cows, as a widow may,
On the marshes where the grass is salt and sweet,
As your Highness knows—and always true to pail
Until this Nicolo——

Nicolo. Lies! lies, your Highness!

Old Woman. —having a quarrel, puts the evil eye
On Serafina. She's my best of cows,
In stall with calf but ten days weaned.

Nicolo. Lies! lies!

Old Woman. I would your Highness saw her! When
that thief

Hangs upon Lazarus' bosom, he'll be bidding
A ducat for each drop of milk he's cost me,
To cool his tongue.

Regent. Ay—ay, the cow is sick,
I think; and mind me, being country-bred,
Of a cure for such: which is, to buy a comb
And comb the sufferer's tail at feeding-time.

The Regent

If Zia Agnese do but this, she'll counter
The Evil Eye, and maybe with her own
Detect who thieves her Serafina's hay.

Old Woman. } God bless your Highness!
Nicolo. }

Regent (taking up a fresh suit). Why, what's here?

'*Costanza,*

Wife of Giuseppe Boni, citeth him

And sueth to live separate, for neglect

And divers beatings, as to wit——' H'm, h'm——

'Likewise to keep the child Geronimo,

Begotten of his body.' You defend

The suit, Giuseppe?

A Young Peasant (shrugs his shoulders). As the woman
will!

I'll not deny I beat her.

Regent. But neglect!

How came you to neglect her? Look on her—

The handsome, frowsy slut, that, by appearance,

Hath never washed her body since she wed.

A beating we might pass. But how neglect

To take her by the neck unto the pump

And hold her till her wet and furious face

Were once again worth kissing? Well—well—well!

Neglect is proven. She shall have deserts:

(*To a Clerk*) But—write, 'Defendant keeps his law-
ful child.'

The Regent

Young Peasant. My lady——

Wife. Nay, my lady——

Regent. Eh? What's this?

Wife. The poor *bambino*! Nay, 'twas not the suit!

How should Giuseppe, being a fool, a man——

Young Peasant. Aye, aye: that's sense. I love him: still,
you see——

Regent. An if my judgment suit you not, go home,

The pair! (*As they are going she calls the woman back.*)

Costanza! hath your husband erred

With other woman?

Young Peasant. Never!

Wife. I'll not charge him

With that.

Regent. But, yes, you may. This man hath held
Another woman to his breast.

Wife. Her name!

That I may tear her eyes!

Regent. Her name's Costanza.

The same Costanza that, with body washed,

With ribbon in her hair, light in her eyes,

Arrayed a cottage to allure his heart.

Go home, poor fools, and find her! . . .

Heigh! No others? [*Heaves a sigh.*]

Captain, dismiss the Guard. The watch, aloft——

Set him elsewhere. We would not be o'erlooked.

You only, Lucio—you, Lucetta—stay;

The Regent

You for a while, Cesario.

[*Exeunt Courtiers, Guard, Crowd, etc.*

Heigh! that's over—

The last Court of the Regent; and the books,
Accounts of stewardship, my seven years all,
Closed here for audit.

Nay, there's one thing more—

Brother, erewhile I spoke you sisterly.

You turned away, and still you bite your lip:

Signs that may short my preface. It concerns

The Countess Fulvia.

Lucio.

Ha!

Regent.

Go, bring her, Captain.

[*Exit Cesario.*

List to me, Lucio: listen, brother dear,
First playmate—child, tending whose innocence
Myself learned motherhood. Shall I deny
Youth to be loved and follow after love?
There is a love breaks like a morning beam
On the husht novice kneeling by his arms;
And worse there is, whose kisses strangle love,
Whose feet take hold of hell. My Lucio,
Follow not that!

Lucio.

Why, who—who hath maligned
The Countess?

Regent. Not maligned. Lucetta, here——

Lucio. Lucetta! Curse Lucetta and her tongue!

The Regent

Am I a child, to be nagged by waiting-maids?

Regent. No, but a man, and shall weigh evidence.

Lucio. But I'll not hear it! If her viper tongue
Can kill, why kill it must. But send me a man,
And I will smite his mouth—ay, slit his tongue—
That dares defame the Countess!

Regent. Stay: she comes.

[*Enter the Countess Fulvia, Cesario attending.*]

Madam, the reason wherefore you are summoned
No doubt you guess, from a rude earlier call
Our Captain paid you. Certain practices,
Which you may force me name, are charged upon
you

On testimony you may force me call
And may with freedom question.

Fulvia. I'll not question:
No, nor I will not answer.

Lucio. Then I'll answer!
For me, for all, she is innocent!

Regent. For you?
We'll hope it: but 'for all' 's more wide an oath
Than you can swear, sir. I'll not bandy you
Words nor debate. Myself the ladder saw;
Lucetta, here, the ladder and the man.
What man she will not say. Cesario
Has tracked his footprint on her garden plots.
Must we say more?

The Regent

Fulvia. No need. Her fingering mind
Is a close cupboard turning all things rancid.

Lucio. Yea, for such wry-necks all the world's a lawn
To peek and peer and pounce a sinful worm;
The fatter, the more luscious.

Regent. Lucio,
This woman nought gainsays.

Fulvia (fiercely). As why should I?
I'll question not, nor answer. 'Neath your brow
My sentence hunches, crawls, like cat to spring.
Pah! there's no prude will match your virtuous wife!
You'd banish me?

Regent. I do. Cesario,
See to it the City gate shuts not to-night,
And she this side.

Fulvia (laughs recklessly). To-night? To-night's your
own.

Most modest woman! Duchess, there's a well
By the road, some seven miles beyond the town.
There, 'neath the stars, I'll dip a hand and drink
To the good Duke's disport. But have a care!
That cup's not yet to lip.

Regent. Captain, remove her.
Lucio, remain.

[*Exit the Countess Fulvia, Cesario following.*]

Lucio. I'll not remain—When ice
Sits judge of fire, what justice shall be done?

The Regent

Sister, there be your books—peruse them. There
The sea-line—bide you so with back to it.
While the cold inward heat of cruelty
Warms what was once your heart, now crusted o'er
With duty and slimed with poisonous drip of tongues.
God help the Duke, if what he left he'd find!

[*Exit Lucio.*

Regent. Is't so, I wonder? Go, Lucetta, fetch
My glass, if haply I may tell.

[*Exit Lucetta.*

Is't so?

And have these years enforced, encrusted me
To something monstrous, neither woman nor man?
My lord, my lord! too heavy was the load
You laid! Yet I'll not blame you: for myself
Ruled the straight path, the long account correct
As in these books, my ledgers. . . .

[*While she turns the pages, Gamba the Fool creeps
in and hoists himself on the balustrade. He tries
his viol, and sings.*

SONG: *Gamba.*

Bird of the South, my Rondinello—
Regent. Hey? That Song!
Gamba. Hie to me, fly to me, steel-blue mate!
Under my breast-knot flutters thy fellow;
Here can I rest not, and thou so late.

The Regent

Home, to me, home!

'Love, love, I come!'

—Dear one, I wait!

Quanno nacesti tu, nacqui pur io:

La lundananza tua, 'l desiderio mio!

You know the song, madonna?

Regent.

Ay, fool. Sit

Here at my feet, sing on.

Gamba (sings).

Tell of my love, my Rondinello,

Under whose wing my heart hath lain,

What land delays him, dear nest-fellow?

Daulian woodland, Libyan plain.

'Wait, my love, wait!'

Ah, desolate!

Ah, love, the pain!

Addio, addio! ed un' altra volt' addio!

La lundananza tua, 'l desiderio mio!

(Pause).

A foolish rustic thing the shepherd wives

In our Abruzzi croon, by winter fires,

Of their husbands in the plains.

Regent.

Gamba!

Gamba.

Madonna?

Regent. I'd make thee my confessor. Mindest thou,

By Villalago, where from Sanno's lake

The Regent

The stream, our Tasso, hurls it down the glen?
One noon, with Lucio—ever in those days
With Lucio—on a rock within the spray,
I wove a ferny garland, while the boy
Roamed, but returned in triumph, having trapped
A bee in a bell-flower—held it to my ear,
Laughing, dissembling that he feared to loose
The hairy thief. So laughed we—and were still,
As deep in Vallescura wound a horn,
And up the pathway 'neath the dappling bough
Came riding—flecked with sunshine, man and
horse,—

My lord, my lover; and that song, that song
Upon his lips. . . .

Voice of Watchman. Sail ho! a sail! a sail!

[*Murmur of populace below. It grows and swells to
a roar as enter hurriedly courtiers, guards, and
others: Cesario; Lucetta with mirror.*]

Lucetta. My lady! O my lady!—

Cesario. See, they near!

Galley on galley—look, there, by the point!

Regent. O, could my heart keep tally with the surge
That here comes crowding!

Lucetta. Joy, my lady! Joy!

All. Joy! Joy, my lady!

[*They press flowers on her. A pause, while they
watch. On the canal the galleys come into sight.*]

The Regent

They near: and as the oars rise and fall, the rowers' chorus is borne from the distance. It is the Rondinello song.

Chorus in distance. La lundananza tua, 'l desiderio mio!

Regent. Thanks, my good, good friends!

And deem it not discourteous if alone

I'd tune my heart to bliss.

My glass, Lucetta!

[*Takes mirror.*

Some thoughts there are—some thoughts—

Courtiers.

God save you, madam!

[*They go out, leaving the Regent alone.*

Regent (she loosens the clasp of her robe). Some thoughts—
—some thoughts—

Fall from me, envious robe!

Rest there, my crown—thou more than leaden ache!

Ah!—

God! What a mountain drops! I float—I am lifted

Like thistledown on nothing. Back, my crown—

Weight me to earth! Nay, nay, thy rim shall bite

No more upon this forehead . . . Where's my glass?

O mirror, mirror, hath it bit so deep?

My love is coming, hark! O, say not grey,

Sweet mirror! Tell, what time to cure it now?

And he so near, so near!

How shall I meet him?

Why how but as the river leaps to sea,

The Regent

Steel to its magnet, child to mother's arms?

[She catches up flowers from the baskets left by the courtiers, and decks herself wildly.

Flowers for my hair, flowers at the breast! Sweet flowers,

He'll crush you 'gainst his corslet. He has arms

Like bands of iron for clasping, has my love.

He'll hurt, he'll hurt . . . But oh, sweet flowers, to lie

And feel you helpless while he grips and bruises

Your weak protesting breasts! You'll die in bliss,

Panting your fragrance out.—

Wh'st! Hush, poor fool!

I have unlearned love's very alphabet.

Men like us coy, demure . . . Then I'll coquet

And play Madam Disdain—but not to-day.

To-morrow I'll be shrewish, shy, perverse,

Exacting, cold—all April in my moods:

We'll walk the forest, and I'll slip from him,

Hide me like Dryad 'mid the oaks, and mark

His hot dark face pursuing; or I'll couch

In covert green, and hold my breath to hear

His blundering foot go by; then up I'll leap,

And run—and he'll run after. O this lightness!

I'll draw him like a fairy, dance and double—

Yet not so fast but he shall overtake

At length, and catch me panting. O, I charge you,

I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem,

The Regent

Wake not my love beneath the forest bough
Where we lie dreaming!

[*Fanfare of trumpets in the distance.*

Trumpets, hark! and drums!
They have landed! From the quay they march!
Flowers! flowers!

They are near . . . I see him! . . . Carlo! lord and
love!

He looks—waves—O 'tis he! O foolish heart!—
I had feared he'd ta'en a wound.

What is't they shout?

Eh? 'Victory!'—yes, yes. He's browner, thinner;
And the dear eyes, how gaunt! . . . Yes, 'Victory!'
'Victory!' . . . lord, and love! . . .

[*The shouts of acclamation are heard now close under
the terrace. Spears and banners are seen trooping
past. Beside herself, she throws flowers to them,
laughing, weeping the while. Then, running to the
Chapel door, she throws herself before the image
of the Virgin that crowns its archway.*

O Mary, Mother!

Thou, in whose breast all women's thoughts have
moved,

All woman's passions heaved. Lo! I adore!

Sweet Mother, hold my hands, rejoice with me:

My bridegroom cometh!

[*During this invocation the Countess Fulvia has crept*

The Regent

in, a stiletto in her hand. She leans over the Regent, drags her backward by the hair, and stabs her twice in the breast.

Fulvia. Then with that!—and that!

Go meet him!

Regent (turns, looks up, and falls on her face).

Oh! I am slain!

Fulvia. And I am worse!

But there's my red flower, on your wifely breast.—

Wife, meet your lord and show it!

[She passes down the steps as Lucetta runs in.]

Lucetta. Madam! Madam!

The Duke is at the gate—Madam!—

Christ! she is murdered! Murder! Murder!

Regent. Fie,

Lucetta! peace! What word to greet the Duke

For his home-coming! Lift me . . . Quick, my robe—

My Crown! Call no one. O, but hasten!

Lucetta (helpless, wringing her hands). Madam!

Regent. I need your strength, and must I steady you?

Lucetta, years ago you disarrayed me

Upon my bridal night. I would you'd whisper

The rogueries your tongue invented then.

I have few moments, girl . . . I'd have them wanton.

Make jest this mantle hides the maid I was.

I'll have no priest, no doctor—Fetch Tonino!

I must present his son——

The Regent

[*Lucetta runs out.*

All's acted quick:

Bride-bed, conception, birth—and death! But he
Shall sum it in one moment death not takes . . .

What noise of trumpets! . . . Is the wound not
covered?

[*She wraps herself carefully in her mantle as the courtiers pour in. The child Tonino runs to her and stands by her side. Lucio, Cesario, all the Court, group themselves round her as the Duke enters. He rushes in eagerly; but she sets her teeth on her anguish, and receives him with a low reverence.*

Welcome my lord!

Duke.

Ottilia!

Regent.

Good my lord,

Welcome! This day is bright restores you to
Your loyal Duchy.

Duke (impatient).

Wife! Ottilia!

Regent (she lifts a hand to keep him at distance).

There must be forms, my lord—some forms! Cesario,

Render the Duke his sceptre. As bar to socket,
When the gate closes on a town secure,
So locks this rod back to his manly clutch—
Cry all, 'Long live the Duke!'

All.

Long live the Duke!

The Regent

Duke. Wife, make an end with forms!

Lucio (to Cesario). And so say I!

A man would think my sister had no blood
In her body.

Cesario (watching the Regent). Peace, man: something
there's amiss.

Regent. Yet here is he that sceptre shall inherit.

Lucetta, lead his first-born to the Duke.

His first-born!—Nay but look on him how straight
Of limb, how set and shoulder-square, tho' slender!
He'll sit a horse, in time, and toss a lance
Even with his father.

Duke. There's my blessing, boy!

But stand aside. Look in my face, Otilia—
Hearken me, all! One thing these seven years
My life hath lacked, which wanting, all your cannon,
Your banners, *vivas*, bells that rock the roofs,
Throng'd windows, craning faces—all—all—all
Were phantasms, were noise.—

Lucio (exclaims). Why look, here's blood!

Here, on the boy's hand!

Regent. Ay! a scratch, no worse,

Here, when I pinned my robe.

Duke (continuing). Nay, friends, this moment

My Duchy her dear hand restores to me
To me's a dream. More buoyant would I tread
Dumb street, deserted square, climb ruin'd wall,

The Regent

Where in a heap beneath a broken flag

Lay Adria—

So that amid the ruins stood my love

And stretched her hands so faintly—stretched her
hands

So faintly. See! She's mine! She lifts them——

*Regent (totters and falls into his arms with a tired, happy
laugh, which ends in a cry as his arms enfold her).*
Ah!

[*She faints.*

Duke (after a moment, releasing her a little). What's
here? . . . Otilia!

Lucetta. My mistress swoons!

A Courtier. 'Tis happiness——

Duke. Fetch water!

Lucio. Nay this blood—
Came of no scratch!

Lucetta. Loosen her bodice——

Duke. Blood?
Why blood? Where's blood?

(*Stares as the mantle is unclasped and falls open.*)

Ah, my God!

Lucetta. Murder! murder!

The Countess Fulvia——

Cesario. Speak!

Lucetta. There—while she knelt—
Stabbed her, and fled.

The Regent

Cesario. Which way?

[Lucetta points to the stairs. He dashes off in pursuit.]

Duke. All-seeing God!

Where were thine eyes, or else thy justice? Dead?

O, never dead!

Lucio. Ay, Duke, push God aside,

As I push thee. I have the better right:

I killed her—I! O never pass, sweet soul,

Till thou hast drunk a shudder of this wretch,

Thy brother, playmate, murderer!

Duke. Wine! bring wine—

Regent (as the wine is brought and revives her).

Flower, he will crush thee—but the bliss, the bliss!

I swim in bliss. What . . . Lucio? Where's my lord?

Dear, bring him: he was here awhile and held me.

Say he must hold, or the light air will lift

And bear me quite away.

*[Re-enter Cesario. In one hand he carries his sword,
in the other a dagger.]*

Lucio. Cesario!

What! Is that devil escaped? To think—to think

I drank her kisses!—What? Where is she?

Cesario. Dead.

I raised the cry: the people pointed after;

Ran with me, ravening. Just this side the bridge

She heard our howl and turned—drew back the
dagger

The Regent

Red with our lady's blood, then drove it home
Clean . . .

Regent. God pardon her!

I would what blood of mine clung to the blade
Might mix with hers and sweeten it for mercy.

Lucio. Will you forgive her? Then forgive not me!

Regent. Dear Lucio!—You'll not pluck away your hand
This time? Hush! Where's Cesario? . . . Friend,
farewell.

Where lies the body?

Cesario. Sooth, madonna, I flung it
To the river's will, to roll it down to sea
Or cast on muddy bar, for dogs to gnaw.

Regent. The river? Ah! How strong the river rolls!
Hold me, my lord—

Duke. Love, love, I hold you!

Regent. —Ay!

The child, too—You will hold the child? . . .

This roar

Deafens but will not drown us.

[Within the Chapel the choir is chanting. Gamba goes and closes the door on the sound: then creeps to the foot of the couch. The dying woman gently motions aside the cross a priest is holding to her, and looks up at her husband.]

[Below the terrace a voice is heard singing the Ron-dinello song.]

The Regent

Look! beyond

Be waters where no galley moves with oar,
So wide, so waveless,—and, between the woods,
Meadows—O land me there! . . . Hark, my lord's
voice

Singing in Vallescura! Soft, my love,
I am so tired—so tired! Love, let me play!

[*Dies.*

[The Courtiers lift the body in silence and bear it to the Chapel, the Duke and his train following. The doors close on them. On the stage are left only Cesario, standing by the balustrade; and Gamba, who has seated himself with his viol and touches it, as still the voice sings below—

Addio, Addio! ed un'altra volt'addio!

La lundananza tua, 'l desiderio mio!

[On the last note a string of the viol cracks, and with a cry the Fool flings himself on the empty couch. Cesario steps forward and stands over him, touching his shoulder gently.

TRANSLATIONS

THE VIGIL OF VENUS

THE *Pervigilium Veneris*—of unknown authorship, but clearly belonging to the late literature of the Roman Empire—has survived in two MSS., both preserved at Paris in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.

Of these two MSS. the better written may be assigned (at earliest) to the close of the seventh century; the other (again at earliest) to the close of the ninth. Both are corrupt; the work of two illiterate copyists who—strange to say—were both smatterers enough to betray their little knowledge by converting *Pervigilium* into *Per Virgilium* (*scilicet*, 'by Virgil'): thus helping us to follow the process of thought by which the Middle Ages turned Virgil into a wizard. Here and there the texts become quite silly, separately or in consent; and just where they agree in the most surprising way—*i. e.* in the arrangement of the lines—the conjectural emendator is invited to do his worst by a note at the head of the older Codex, 'Sunt vero versus xxii'—'There are rightly twenty-two lines.'

This has started much ingenious guess-work. But no really convincing rearrangement has been achieved as yet; and I have been content to take the text pretty well as it stands, with a few corrections upon which most scholars agree. With a poem of 'paratactic structure' the best of us may easily go astray by transposing lines, or blocks of lines, to correspond with *our* sequence of thought; and I shall be content if, following the only texts to which appeal can be made,¹ my translation be generally intelligible.

It runs pretty closely, line for line, with the original; because

¹ Facsimiles of the two Codices can be studied in a careful edition of the *Pervigilium* by Sir Cecil Clementi, published by Mr. B. H. Blackwell of Oxford, 1911.

The Vigil of Venus

one may love and emulate classical terseness even while despairing to rival it. But it does not attempt to be literal; for even were it worth doing, I doubt if it be possible for any one in our day to hit precisely the note intended by an author or heard by a reader in the eighth century. Men change subtly as nations succeed to nations, religions to religions, philosophies to philosophies; and it is a property of immortal poetry to shift its appeal. It does not live by continuing to mean the same thing. It grows as we grow. We smile, for instance, when some interlocutor in a dialogue of Plato takes a line from the *Iliad* and applies it seriously *au pied de la lettre*. We can hardly conceive what the great line conveyed to him; but it may mean something equally serious to us, though in a different way.

PERVIGILIUM VENERIS

CRAS *amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras
amet.*

Ver novum, ver jam canorum, vere natus orbis est;

Vere concordant amores, vere nubunt alites,

Et nemus comam resolvit de maritis imbribus.

Cras amorum copulatrix inter umbras arborum 5

Inplicat casas virentes de flagello myrteo:

Cras Dione jura dicit fulta sublimi throno.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

Tunc liquore de superno spumeo et ponti globo,

Cæulas inter catervas, inter et bipedes equos, 10

Fecit undantem Dionen de maritis imbribus.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

THE VIGIL OF VENUS

TO-MORROW—*What news of to-morrow?*

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who
have loved, love anew!*

It is Spring, it is chorussing Spring; 'tis the birthday of
Earth, and for you!

It is Spring; and the Loves and the birds wing together
and woo to accord

Where the bough to the rain has unbraided her locks as
a bride to her lord.

For she walks—she our Lady, our Mistress of Wed-
lock—the woodlands atween, 5

And the bride-bed she weaves them, with myrtle en-
lacing, with curtains of green.

Look aloft! list the law of Dione, sublime and en-
throned in the blue:

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have
loved, love anew!*

Time was that a rain-cloud begat her, impregning the
heave of the deep,

'T'wixt hooves of sea-horses a-scatter, stampeding the
dolphins as sheep. 10

Lo! arose of that bridal Dione, rainbow'd and besprent
of its dew!

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have
loved, love anew!*

The Vigil of Venus

Ipsa gemmis purpurantem pingit annum floribus,
Ipsa surgentes papillas de Favoni spiritu
Urget in toros tepentes; ipsa roris lucidi 15
Noctis aura quem relinquit, spargit umentes aquas.
Et micant lacrimæ trementes de caduco pondere:
Gutta præceps orbe parvo sustinet casus suos.
En, pudorem florulentæ prodiderunt purpuræ:
Umor ille quem serenis astra rorant noctibus 20
Mane virgineas papillas solvit umentis peplo.
Ipsa jussit mane ut udæ virgines nubant rosæ;
Fusa Paphies de cruore deque Amoris osculis
Deque gemmis deque flammis deque solis purpuris,
Cras ruborem qui latebat veste tectus ignea 25

The Vigil of Venus

She, she, with her gem-dripping finger enamels the
wreath of the year;
She, she, when the maid-bud is nubile and swelling,
winds—whispers anear,
Disguising her voice in the Zephyr's—'So secret the
bed! And thou shy?' 15
She, she, thro' the hush'd humid Midsummer night
draws the dew from on high;
Dew bright with the tears of its origin, dew with its
weight on the bough,
Misdoubting and clinging and trembling—'Now, now
must I fall? Is it now?'
Star-fleck'd on the stem of the brier as it gathers and
falters and flows,
Lo! its trail runs a ripple of fire on the nipple it bids be
a rose, 20
Yet englobes it diaphanous, veil upon veil in a tiffany
drawn
To bedrape the small virginal breasts yet unripe for the
spousal of dawn;
Till the vein'd very vermeil of Venus, till Cupid's in-
carnadine kiss,
Till the ray of the ruby, the sunrise, ensanguine the
bath of her bliss;
Till the wimple her bosom uncover, a tissue of fire to
the view, 25

The Vigil of Venus

Unico marita nodo non pudebit solvere.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

Ipsa nymphas diva luco jussit ire myrteo :

It puer comes puellis. Nec tamen credi potest

Esse Amorem feriatum, si sagittas vexerit. 30

Ite, nymphæ, posuit arma, feriatum est Amor;

Jussus est inermis ire, nudus ire jussus est,

Neu quid arcu, neu sagitta, neu quid igne læderet;

Sed tamen nymphæ cavete, quod Cupido pulcher est;

Est in armis totus idem quando nudus est Amor! 35

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

Conpari Venus pudore mittit ad te virgines :

Una res est quam rogamus : cede, virgo Delia,

The Vigil of Venus

And the zone o'er the wrists of the lover slip down as
they reach to undo.

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have
loved, love anew!*

'Go, maidens,' Our Lady commands, 'while the myrtle
is green in the groves,

Take the Boy to your escort.' 'But ah!' cry the maidens,
'what trust is in Love's

Keeping holiday too, while he weareth his archery,
tools of his trade?' 30

'Go! he lays them aside, an apprentice released; ye may
wend unafraid.

See, I bid him disarm, he disarms; mother-naked I bid
him to go,

And he goes mother-naked. What flame can he shoot
without arrow or bow?'

Yet beware ye of Cupid, ye maidens! Beware most of
all when he charms

As a child: for the more he runs naked, the more he's a
strong man-at-arms. 35

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have
loved, love anew!*

'Lady Dian'—Behold how demurely the damsels ap-
proach her and sue—

'Hear Venus her only petition! Dear maiden of Delos,
depart!

The Vigil of Venus

Ut nemus sit incruentum de ferinis stragibus.

Ipsa vellet ut venires, si deceret virginem: 40

Jam tribus choros videres feriatos noctibus

Congreges inter catervas ire per saltus tuos,

Floreas inter coronas, myrteas inter casas:

Nec Ceres nec Bacchus absunt, nec poetarum Deus;

De tenente tota nox est perviglanda canticis: 45

Regnet in silvis Dione; tu recede, Delia.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

Jussit Hyblæis tribunal stare diva floribus;

Præses ipsa jura dicit, adsederunt Gratia.

Hybla, totos funde flores quidquid annus adtulit; 50

Hybla, florum rumpe vestem quantus Ætnæ campus est.

The Vigil of Venus

Let the forest be bloodless to-day, unmolested the roe
and the hart!

Holy huntress, thyself she would bid be her guest,
could thy chastity stoop 40

To approve of our revels, our dances—three nights
that we weave in a troop

Arm-in-arm thro' thy sanctu'ries whirling, till faint and
dispersed in the grove

We lie with thy lilies for chaplets, thy myrtles for ar-
bours of love:

And Apollo, with Ceres and Bacchus to chorus—song,
harvest, and wine—

Hymns thee dispossess'd, "'Tis Dione who reigns! Let
Diana resign!" 45

O, the wonderful nights of Dione! dark bough, with
her star shining thro'!

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have
loved, love anew!*

She has set up her court, has Our Lady, in Hybla, and
deckt it with blooms:—

With the Graces at hand for assessors Dione dispenses
her dooms.

Now burgeon, O Hybla! put forth and abound, till
Proserpina's field 50

To the foison thy lap overflowing its laurel of Sicily
yield.

The Vigil of Venus

Ruris hic erunt puellæ, vel puellæ montium,

Quæque silvas, quæque lucos, quæque fontes incolunt:

Jussit omnes adsidere mater alitis dei,

Jussit et nudo puellas nil Amori credere. 55

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

Et rigentibus virentes ducit umbras floribus:

Cras erit quum primus Æther copulavit nuptias,

Et pater totum creavit vernis annum nubibus.

In sinum maritus imber fluxit almæ conjugis, 60

Unde fetus mixtus omnes aleret magno corpore.

Ipsa venas atque mentem permeanti spiritu

Intus occultis gubernat procreatrix viribus,

Perque cœlum, perque terras, perque pontum subditum

The Vigil of Venus

Call, assemble the nymphs—hamadryad and dryad—
the echoes who court

From the rock, who the rushes inhabit, in ripples who
swim and disport.

‘I admonish you maids—I, his mother, who suckled
the scamp ere he flew—

An ye trust to the Boy flying naked, some pestilent
prank ye shall rue.’ 55

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have
loved, love anew!*

She has coax’d her the shade of the hazel to cover the
wind-flower’s birth,

Since the day the Great Father begat it, descending in
streams upon Earth;

When the Seasons were hid in his loins, and the Earth
lay recumbent, a wife,

To receive in the searching and genital shower the soft
secret of life. 60

As the terrible thighs drew it down, and conceived, as
the embryo ran

Thoro’ blood, thoro’ brain, and the Mother gave all to
the making of man,

She, she, our Dione, directed the seminal current to
creep,

Penetrating, possessing, by devious paths all the height,
all the deep.

The Vigil of Venus

Pervium sui tenorem seminali tramite 65

Inbuit, jussitque mundum nosse nascendi vias.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

Ipsa Trojanos nepotes in Latinos transtulit,

Ipsa Laurentem puellam conjugem nato dedit;

Moxque Marti de sacello dat pudicam virginem; 70

Romuleas ipsa fecit cum Sabinis nuptias,

Unde Ramnes et Quirites proque prole posterum

Romuli matrem crearet et nepotem Cæsarem.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

Rura fecundat voluptas: rura Venerem sentiunt: 75

Ipsæ Amor puer Dionæ rure natus dicitur.

The Vigil of Venus

She, of all procreation procuress, the share to the fur-
row laid true; 65

She, she, to the womb drave the knowledge, and open'd
the ecstasy through.

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have
loved, love anew!*

Her favour it was fill'd the sail of the Trojan for Latium
bound;

Her favour that won her Æneas a bride on Laurentian
ground,

And anon from the cloister inveigled the Virgin, the
Vestal, to Mars; 70

As her wit by the wild Sabine rape recreated her Rome
for its wars,

With the Ramnes, Quirites, together ancestrally proud
as they drew

From Romulus down to our Cæsar—last, best of that
bone, of that thew.

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have
loved, love anew!*

Pleasure planteth a field; it conceives to the passion, the
pang, of his joy. 75

In a field was Dione in labour delivered of Cupid the
Boy;

The Vigil of Venus

Hunc ager, cum parturiret ipsa, suscepit sinu :

Ipsa florum delicatis educavit osculis.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

Ecce jam super genestas explicant tauri latus, 80

Quisque tutus quo tenetur conjugali foedere :

Subter umbras cum maritis ecce balantum greges ;

Et canoras non tacere diva jussit alites.

Jam loquaces ore rauco stagna cycni perstrepunt ;

Adsonat Terei puella subter umbram populi, 85

Ut putes motus amoris ore dici musico,

Et neges queri sororem de marito barbaro.

Illa cantat, nos tacemus. Quando ver venit meum?

Quando fiam uti chelidon, ut tacere desinam?

The Vigil of Venus

And the field in its fostering lap from her travail received him: he drew

Mother's milk from the delicate kisses of flowers; and he prosper'd and grew—

Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have loved, love anew!

Lo! behold ye the bulls, with how lordly a flank they bespawl on the broom!— 80

Yet obey the uxorious yoke, and are tamed to Dione her doom.

Or behear ye the sheep, to the husbanding rams how they bleat to the shade!

Or behear ye the birds, at the Goddess' command how they sing unafraid!

Be it harsh as the swannery's clamour that shatters the hush of the lake,

Be it dulcet as where Philomela holds darkling the poplar awake, 85

So melting her soul into music, you'd vow 'twas her passion, her own,

She plaineth—her sister forgot, with the Daulian crime long-agone.

Hark! Hush! Draw around to the circle . . . Ah, loitering Summer! Say when

For me shall be broken the charm, that I chirp with the swallow again?

The Vigil of Venus

Perdidi Musam tacendo, nec me Apollo respicit; 90

Sic Amyclas, cum tacerent, perdidit silentium.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

The Vigil of Venus

I am old; I am dumb; I have waited to sing till Apollo
withdrew— 90

So Amyclæ a moment was mute, and for ever a wilder-
ness grew.

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have
loved, love anew,*

To-morrow!—to-morrow!

HESIOD'S WINTER

WORKS AND DAYS, 504-563

AROUND the January month! the bad days fit to skin
An ox alive, the bitter frosts, yea, bitterer than sin:
When Boreas blows across the heath, and thro' the
 herds of horse
That range and crop the Thracian heaths he buffets
 down in force
On the spread sea, and heaves it high, and field and
 forest howl
As fierce on topping oak he falls, on screen of pine afoul,
And smashes them in mountain glens flat on their nur-
 sery ground,
While mile on mile thro' echoing wood runs panic of
 the sound:
And shuddering beasties tuck their tails beneath their
 hinder parts,
Yet shag nor fur on breast or rump defeat his icy darts.
He pierces past the bullock's hide, unhindered on he
 goes
Clean thro' the goat's cuirass of hair; only in vain his
 blows
Rain on the sheep; their heavy pelts defeat him—*they*'ll
 not feel.
But any old rheumatic man he'll bend like any wheel!

Hesiod's Winter

There's some one else despises him—the tender maid
who stays

Indoors, her mother mothering, and knows not yet the
ways

Of Aphrodite, wedlock-ripe, but keeps her body clean,
Anointed, tucked in inner room the blankets warm be-
tween.

Corners there be for winter days! So think of her and
then

Think on the famished cuttlefish that in his fireless den
Gnaws his own foot: for him no food the partial Sun
provides

That thro' midwinter to and fro o'er Æthiopia rides
And warms the dingy African—but creeps an insect
pace

Erespreads it north to shine upon the wide Hellenic race.

Thus miserably scatters all the wild-wood, deer and
hare,

With chattering teeth, 'cross holt and heath, and all to
find a lair,

All of a mind some den to find, to huddle down and
hutch

Against the cold that kills the old man pegging with his
crutch,

Snow-strayed, two-doubled, shielding eyes his window-
light to find. . . .

Hesiod's Winter

Against this season then, if wise, you'll wear a jerkin
lined,

A tunic reaching to your knees almost, with plenty
knap:

Fat as a flea to snug therein, to tramp and care no rap
For weather; not the worst can raise a goose-flesh on
your skin.

Item, a pair of rawhide boots well stuffed of felt within:

Item—against the frost a sound specific 'tis to tack

A pair of kid-skins edge to edge with thongs. They
warm the back

And turn the rain, you'd hardly think! *Item*, a close felt
cap

With wind-guards wide and closely tied o'er either ear
a flap

'Gainst Boreas when he swoops and drives the morning
damp to spread

O'er fold and field, in time to yield us souls our daily
bread.

Good luck! The gods are over us: but how this blessed
juice

Sucks up from earth to fall again and nourish us, by
Zeus

If I can make that out! Yet sure at night it turns to
rain,

And then, with just a fetch to North, the muck comes
back again!

Hesiod's Winter

Get home before the beggar starts: beware of him:
don't let

Him catch and drench and soak you till thro' shirt and
skin you're wet.

Plague on this January month! as hard on beast as
wights!

Cut down your cattle-fodder—feed your belly 'gainst
the nights—

That's my advice—and carry on and see the nuisance
through:

So wait upon the Equinox to fetch the circle true,
And trust your Mother Earth her various fruitage to
renew.

THE HOMERIC HYMN TO THE DELIAN APOLLO

I

I SHALL remember—how can I forget?—
Apollo, the great Archer, as he strode
First adown Zeus's hall, and all asweat
Upstarted every god
With terror of that bowstring taut and shining.
Leto alone, divining,
Stood by the Thunderer, calm. The gear she took
From the lad's shoulder, all the sling undid,
Let slack the cord, shut down the quiver's lid,
Hung bow and quiver on one golden hook
Against a pillar of his father's house:
Then to the high throne led him up.—
And Zeus his father, tendering a cup
Of nectar, heavenly juice,
Bade his son welcome and the gods carouse.
So the Immortals sat them down again
And noisy pledged the twain—
Father and son, with Leto—Leto fain
Sith she had borne this archer-child to Zeus.

II

How shall I praise him fully or aright,
To whom all fields of song allotted are?
Of whom the mainland pastures breathe delight
To isle on isle afar?

The Homeric Hymn

Whose is the upland, whose the crag above,
Fowering, whose is the stream cascading down
To wed the sea in any tidal cove
That holds a steep-to beach, a tiny fishing town?

III

Shall I recount how Leto bare thee, first,
Charmer of souls?—there as she fell forspent
On Cythnus, on the side of Delos rent
This way and that way, as the loud wind went
And from the continent
Captain'd the black wave on the cliff to burst.

IV

There was thy birth: yet thou art lord of all
The isles, and all the folk their surges bound,
Or whom the gate and wall
Of mainland cities tall.—
Crete, Athens or Eubœa, most renown'd
For ships, Ægina small.
And Peparethus, sea-wash'd roods of ground:
Ægae, Eiresiae, Pelion's ragged peak,
Athos of Thrace and Samos Thracian eke,
Scyros, Phocaea—Ida shadowy
With pine forest—clear-cut Autocané,
Fair-stablished Imbros, Lemnos bleak,
Where for landing's far to seek;
Æalian Lesbos, royal throne

The Homeric Hymn

Then, when he, taking into eyes new-born,
Sunlight and sense of my so barren isle,
 In discontent
 And sudden infant scorn,
Spurned me so deep in sea—so near a mile—
That over me for ever should the strong
Wave wash—and over me his heel should pass
To blither temples leafier groves among:
 And I should lie, alas!
 Plunged by that heel,
A nest for the sea-urchin, and the seal
Dive thro' my caverns free, because
 There man no longer was . . .
Yet, an thou wilt give me oath, Divine,
That I be first for men Apollo's shrine,
 And last to abide
His oracle, so be it! I am thine
And his, whose honour certes shall be wide.'

VIII

Then Leto, answering, sware the gods' great oath.—
'Earth and wide Heaven above, hear ye my troth,
And Styx that everlasting runs below,
Bind ye the most dread vow a god can owe.—
I charge me that Apollo's altar stand
Here, and a fragrant garth, and that, for both,
 Delos have honour over every land.'

The Homeric Hymn

IX

Thus sworn, the oath was act.—
And Delos seal'd the pact,
And, for Apollo, blithely her received.
But Leto joyed not: for her loins were rack'd
Nine nights and days—her body heaved
In desperate pangs—till, summoned by her groaning,
Dione came,
Rhea, Ichnaea; Themis closed her claim,
Grey Amphitrité left her caverns moaning,
And goddesses innumerable to name
Ring'd Leto round. Natheless, no urgent call
Of one and all
Could pass where Hera sat, her white arms folding
Sullen, in Zeus's hall,
To her who hath the binding and the holding
Of birth, to Eilithyia, god's and man's
Great midwife—her, by Hera's jealous plans
Held in a golden cloud. .
No cry, howe'er so loud
Of Leto, torn and wild
To bear her faultless child,
Might pierce that magic wall.
So Hera sat, nor stirr'd;
And Eilithyia drowsed nor ever heard.

The Homeric Hymn

X

Then did the goddesses hot counsel hold,
And call on Iris, from the isle to wing
Afoot, and swiftly Eilithyia fetch:

For guerdon promising
A necklace all of amber strung on gold
Nine cubits' stretch.

But strictly was she told
To take the Midwife privily apart
From Hera, and confide
The whispered word aside:
Lest Hera, hard of heart,
Should, after all, her ministration thwart.

XI

The which when Iris heard
Wind-footed she, fleeter than any bird,
On Heaven's floor
Set her to run: and flew
To where the immortal gods keep house above
Olympus. Eilithyia forth she drew,
Soft-tapping, to the door,
And whisper'd her the word
That might the Midwife's bowels of mercy move.
'Yea,' said the Midwife: and they two
Set course for Delos. Side by side they clove
The air, shy dove breasting by sister-dove.

The Homeric Hymn

XII

So Eilithyia levell'd o'er the surf
Her way to Delos: and the labouring throes
 The longest, last,
Took hold on Leto, and her arms she cast
About a palm-tree, rocking to it close,
Pressing her knees into the tender turf
In agony to be eased. Wise Mother Earth
Smiled flowers, and understood—till of a pang,
 Sudden, forth sprang
Phoebus Apollo to the light! and those,
Beholding, raised the jubilant Song of Birth,
Queen upon queen lifting her voice! Yea, then
Queen upon queen did all with busy hands
Let lift and bathe thee, baby-joy of men,
In water pure, and swathe in swaddling bands,
 White, delicate of fold,
 And round thine infant girth
 Let bind a belt of gold.

XIII

Belted in gold, with sword of gold at hip,
 The babe knew not his mother's teat:
'Twas Themis handsell'd his immortal lip
 With provend meet
Whereof the high immortals drink and eat.

The Homeric Hymn

—While Leto languid, glad,
Thought only, he was hers, this lusty archer-lad.

XIV

But he, the Sun-God, did no sooner taste
That food divine than every swaddling-band
 Burst strand by strand,
And burst the belt above his panting waist—
 All hanging loose
About him as he stood and gave command:
 ‘Fetch me my lyre, fetch me my curving bow!
 And, taught by these, shall know
All men, through me, the unfaltering will of Zeus!’

XV

So spake the unshorn God, the Archer bold,
And turn’d to tread the ways of Earth so wide:
While they, all they, had marvel to behold
 How Delos broke in gold
Beneath his feet, as on a mountain side
Sudden, in Spring, a bush is glorified
 And canopied with blossom manifold.
—But he went swinging with a careless stride,
 Proud, in his new artillery bedight,
Up rocky Cythnus, and the isles descried—

The Homeric Hymn

All his, and their inhabitants—for wide,
Wide as he roam'd, ran they in rivalry
To build him temples in a many groves.
And these be his, and all the isles he loves,
 And every foreland height,
 And every river hurrying to the sea.
 But chief in thee,
Delos, as first it was, is his delight.—

XVI

Where the long-robed Ionians, each with mate
And children, pious to his altar throng,
 And, decent, celebrate
His birth with boxing-match and dance and song:
So that a stranger, happening them among,
Would deem that these Ionians have no date,
 Being ageless all so met:
 And he should gaze
 And marvel at their ways,
 Health, wealth, the comely face
On man and woman—envying their estate—
 And yet
You must be never able to forget.
You maids of Delos, dear ones, as ye raise
The hymn to Phoebus, Leto, Artemis,
 In triune praise,

The Homeric Hymn

Then slide your song back upon ancient days
And men whose very name forgotten is,
And women who have lived and gone their ways.
 And make them live agen,
 Charming the tribes of men,
Whose dialects with pretty mimicries
 Ye mock, so true
 They almost woo
The stranger to believe he's singing too!

XVII

Speed me, Apollo: speed me, Artemis!
And you, my dears, farewell! Remember me
Hereafter if from any land that is
 Some traveller question ye—
'Maidens, who was the sweetest man of speech
Fared hither, ever chanted on this beach?'
 I you beseech
Make answer to him, civilly.—

XVIII

'Sir, he was just a blind man, and his home
 In rocky Chios. But his songs were best,
And shall be ever in the days to come.'
 Say that: and as I quest
In fair-wall'd cities far, I'll tell them there

The Homeric Hymn

(They'll list, for 'twill be true)

Of Delos and of you.

But chief and evermore my song shall be

Of Lord Apollo, Prince of archery,

God of the Silver Bow, whom Leto bare—

Leto, the lovely-tress'd.

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